



Class 280.3R

Book C473

General Theological Seminary Library

Chelsea Square, New York

PRESENTED BY

Soc'y for Promoting Religion and Learning

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ITS NATURE AND ITS FUTURE

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

ITS NATURE AND ITS FUTURE

BY

THE RT. REV. H. HENSLEY HENSON, D.D.

THE RT. REV. F. T. WOODS, D.D.

THE REV. CANON A. C. HEADLAM, D.D.

THE REV. CANON E. W. WATSON, D.D.

THE REV. CANON H. L. GOUDGE, D.D.

THE UNIVERSITY OF LONDON PRESS, LTD.

18, WARWICK SQUARE, LONDON, E.C. 4

1919

LONDON :

THE UNIVERSITY OF LONDON PRESS, LTD.

18, WARWICK SQUARE, LONDON, E.C. 4

1919

283

H 395 ch

65802

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

LIBRARY

ANN ARBOR

S 8 '19

PREFACE

THE lectures contained in this volume were delivered in King's College, London, during the autumn of 1918. Regarded as separate entities they need no introduction, and it would be unnecessary and perhaps impertinent to offer any comment on the opinions expressed by the distinguished scholars who were kind enough to accept the invitation to take part in the course. A word of explanation, however, may seem called for as to the reason why these lectures formed part of one course and why they are now collected in a single volume.

This book is not the manifesto of any school of thought. It contains no programme for the reform of the Church. It does not stand for any one definite point of view. It has, indeed, no unity save that of subject, and no lecturer is responsible for any opinions but his own. The idea which inspired this course of lectures was,

PREFACE

in truth, the opposite of that which inspires most collective undertakings of the kind. It was that of bringing together prominent exponents of different tendencies within the Church and of asking each to state as fully and frankly as possible his views on the great problem which gives its title to this book. The aim was to represent not agreement but difference.

The "symposium" is a method of discussion which has been fruitfully employed in dealing with philosophical problems. It has the advantage of bringing sharply into relief the real point at issue between opposing theories, and moreover of revealing not infrequently unsuspected agreements. There is no obvious reason why the same method should not be equally fruitful when applied to Theological and ecclesiastical questions. At any rate the reader should regard this book as of the nature of a symposium. Thus he will be grievously perplexed if he attempts to use it as a manual from which to draw a consistent body of doctrine on the subject with which it deals; but he will probably

PREFACE

find in it valuable material for estimating the ideals and principles which guide important groups of men within the Church of England.

It may be claimed that the service which these lectures aim at performing is no unimportant one, for they furnish the means of mutual understanding. There is a general agreement that, like most institutions, the Church of England is passing through a critical period of its history. In the ecclesiastical, not less than in the secular, sphere there is a demand for reconstruction. But it is to be feared that in both spheres this agreement hardly extends beyond assent to a general proposition. When we cease to pronounce the words "reconstruction" and "reform" and proceed to the prosaic task of definition the divergence of our ideals and the variety of our conceptions of the goal cannot be concealed.

The ecclesiastical mind, at least in its modern exemplars, is said to be peculiarly prone to the delusion that differences can be bridged by formulas and that hard and irreconcilable facts

PREFACE

can be covered by an ambiguous phrase. But in religious matters, as in all else, the way of progress is the way of understanding. We shall not achieve unity of spirit or arrive at any real co-operation unless we are at the pains to understand one another. It is idle to suppose that we can advance together if we are not prepared to take the preliminary step of envisaging clearly and dispassionately the diverse conceptions which are held among us of the nature and functions of the Church. If these lectures have contributed at all towards this end they will have fulfilled the hopes of those who were responsible for their arrangement.

The lecturers who have contributed to this volume have stated their own positions with sufficient definiteness. They have not refrained from dwelling on their differences. They cannot be accused of attempting to create an illusory impression of agreement. And yet, when due weight has been given to differences, there is left a genuine feeling of an underlying unity of spirit which does not lend itself easily

PREFACE

to formulation in propositions. Two convictions at least seem to be shared by all. First, there is a firm belief in the mission and potentialities of the Church of England. The experiences of war have called forth from many quarters exaggerated depreciation of its work and even scarcely veiled doubt of its continued place in God's providential order for this realm. Such thoughts find no echo in these lectures. All alike look back with gratitude on the past and turn with hope to the future. Secondly, there is an agreement that freedom is among the most precious inheritances of the Church of England. Any measure of reorganisation which would tend to limit liberty of teaching or restrict the comprehensive variety of the Church is regarded as matter for grave apprehension. We cannot doubt that, in our modern world, this spirit of hope and toleration is of more value than a rigid doctrinal uniformity.

It remains only to express the thanks of the Theological Faculty of King's College to the authors of these lectures, who have generously

PREFACE

agreed that the profits from the sale of this book should go to the building fund of King's College Hostel for Theological Students.

W. R. MATTHEWS.

KING'S COLLEGE, LONDON,
December 31st, 1918.

CONTENTS

PREFACE	PAGE v
THE CONTINUITY OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND AS A GUIDE TO ITS FUTURE DEVELOPMENT	13
By the Rev. E. W. WATSON, D.D., Canon of Christ Church and Regius Professor of Ecclesiastical History in the University of Oxford	
THE ANGLICAN VERSION OF CHRISTIANITY .	51
By HERBERT HENSLEY HENSON, D.D., Lord Bishop of Hereford	
THE DUTY OF A NATIONAL CHURCH .	113
By H. L. GOUDGE, D.D., Canon of Ely, Principal of Ely Theological College	
SOME CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND	157
By the Rev. A. C. HEADLAM, D.D., Regius Pro- fessor of Divinity in the University of Oxford and Canon of Christ Church ; formerly Principal and Professor of Dogmatic Theology in King's College, London	
THE CHURCH'S PART IN THE PREPARATION FOR THE NEW AGE	191
By F. T. WOODS, D.D., Bishop of Peterborough	

THE CONTINUITY OF THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND AS A GUIDE TO ITS
FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

BY THE REV. E. W. WATSON, D.D.,

*Canon of Christ Church and Regius Professor of Ecclesiastical
History in the University of Oxford*

SYNOPSIS

THE interest of English people in continuity. It is worth while to maintain it in spite of the present wave of despondency about the Church. This despondency is a natural and temporary reaction from past self-complacency. We must look moral facts in the face, and not expect more religious progress than our nation deserves. The evidence shows that there is no ground for despair. The future will be continuous with the past.

Characteristics of the English Church. I.—Large bishoprics. These descend to or from the beginning of our Christianity. The merits of large bishoprics. They confer weight upon their holders. Their origin in England, and the justification for the dignified accessories with which from the first they have been adorned.

II.—The appointment of bishops. In practice the State has always made the choice. Yet canonical election, with its power of rejection, is a valuable security. Reasons why selection by the State is desirable. It is justified by history, analogy, and practical advantage.

III.—The position of the clergy, originally divided into two separate classes, the bishop's staff, which has developed into the cathedral chapter, and the parish priests. The former class ultimately acquires, by agreement with the bishop, independence of him. He surrenders to his chapter a part of his administrative duties. Why should not the bishops be relieved wholly of their legal task, since only part of it till 1836 was laid upon them? The origin of the parish clergy, who took the place of the pagan priests and were dependent, like them, on the local lords. Hence lay patronage; its advantages. The influence of the bishop increases, that of the lord diminishes. But the bishop has never overthrown the "parson's freehold." Its value as a security for freedom and self-respect among the clergy.

THE CONTINUITY OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

I SHALL try in this lecture to point out some of the consequences for our present life of the history of the English Church ; and I will venture to make some suggestions about lessons we may learn for our guidance in any efforts we may make for the improvement of its organisation. This is the better worth our while because of the singular continuity of our national life. It is true that other nations can as little escape the consequences of their past as we ourselves. But we, for good and for evil, are linked with our past more closely and consciously than other great peoples. For the average Frenchman history begins with the Revolution of 1789, for the average American with the Declaration of Independence

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

in 1776. Were we to seek for a date of equal significance for the general English mind we should have to go to 1215, the year of the Great Charter. Not only are our roots, like theirs, in the past, but we are vividly conscious of the fact, and are proud of it. We have a prejudice in our politics, our law, our religion, in its favour ; we hug the chain that links us to our ancestors. We want to know how things have come to be as they are because we value the result—the Providential result—of the forces that have been at work. And we want to be sure that the course of inevitable change shall not rob us of what is valuable, or even of what is harmless, in our inheritance.

Our ideal, then, is continuity. But what is the use of continuity if there be truth in the flood of sickly self-depreciation which preachers and ecclesiastical journalists are pouring upon us ? Rather we should reject the past, and make a fresh start, if the past be such a failure as we are volubly told that it is. To tell the truth, we need not take this rhetoric seriously. It is

CONTINUITY OF THE CHURCH

as hollow as the excitement caused some years ago by an enterprising newspaper which raised the problem "Is marriage a failure?"—doubtless with satisfactory financial results. This notion of the failure of Christianity simply comes from a swing of the pendulum. It is, within certain limits, a healthy reaction. Many of us remember how, thirty years ago, we were morally in a much worse state; in a state of self-glorification. Our Church had been severely attacked by communions which are now in as chastened a frame as our own. We were described as decadent, inefficient, unworthy of the privileged position we were regarded as holding. We repelled the attack by a hearty outburst of self-laudation. Never was a Church so spiritual, so successful in the best sense, as ours. We forgot that we had some empty churches, some dull preachers, some indolent visitors. We woke in time to the unreality of all this. When the Pan-Anglican Conference came we were in our right mind, sober and modest. The pendulum was at the centre of

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

its swing. But it had to complete its course, and now we are indulging in a despondency as unreasonable as the former exhilaration.

Of course it will pass. It is the nature of the crowd to oscillate in thought. Let me take an example that interests us now. Our minds are full of the League of Nations, the brotherhood of mankind. What is that but the swing of the pendulum away from the somewhat flamboyant imperialism of which Mr. Joseph Chamberlain and Mr. Rudyard Kipling were the prophets a few years ago? And a generation earlier there was exactly the same reaction, but a reaction from an idea closely resembling that which attracts us to-day. The pugnacious policy of Lord Palmerston was nothing else than the inevitable reaction against the cosmopolitan ideas of Cobden. The pendulum, to say it again, must have its swing, despondency must alternate, at any rate in the less thoughtful minds, with hope, insular patriotism with international sympathies. To observe the fact does not make us fatalists; the hands of the

CONTINUITY OF THE CHURCH

clock move because the pendulum swings, and history never repeats itself. And therefore, if we are wise, we will not allow ourselves to be swept off our feet by the contagion of the crowd, nor will we be guilty of the folly of believing in the permanence of the phase through which we are passing. We will not take the self-depreciation, the confession of failure, for more than they are worth. They shall be a moral stimulant, and nothing more, for they bear no authentic relation to the facts of the case.

Observation shows that there is a singular uniformity, a variation so small as to be negligible, in religious phenomena. God's dealings with men have been studied for centuries ; for a period long enough and with a completeness sufficient for us to form an estimate concerning their action in the indefinite duration that lies before mankind. We have no reason to think that God works more swiftly or violently on the collective soul of men than He does on the surface of the earth. Theology and geology illustrate each other. Are we much better

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

than our fathers? If we are, then we may expect more striking manifestations of grace than they received. If we are not, we must be content with such advance as we shall deserve. God is in no hurry, and for us the dominant fact is that the mass of mankind are not more quickened towards spiritual things than they have been in the past. We may read, as fully as we will, of the life and morals of Vienna when the last great peace was being framed a century ago. If the next peace, as is very possible, be drawn up in London, will a description of London life, from the Waterloo Road upwards, make edifying reading? ¹ But a victory of faith can only be won when the mass of mankind are consciously striving after righteousness out of loyalty to Christ.

We see then, at the end of the widest horizon we can reach, the same prospect; a world which we cannot regard as dominated by our Lord. But we do not regard it with the same

¹ Written before it was announced that the Congress would be held at Versailles.

CONTINUITY OF THE CHURCH

eyes as our fathers did. Sometimes with terror, sometimes with self-complacency, the men of the Middle Ages and the men of the Reformation would dwell on the certainty, as they regarded it, that only a few would be saved. We have won a wider and a saner view of the goodness of God. I am not sure that the practice of prayer for the dead, and prayer in hope, now universal among us, is not as great an advance as the Christian faith has ever made among English people. It means a hope, based upon trust, which refuses to despair; and a hope cherished on behalf of all that multitude of mixed characters over whom, according to the fashionable despondency, the kingdom of God exercises no reign. Our act of faith contradicts that sentiment of despair. Who are we that we should expect a greater visible success than our fathers? If we look for failure, of course we shall find it. But if we look for success in spiritual things, we shall find it too; and the very fact that we are humiliated is a proof of life, and therefore a proof of God's effectual

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

work. But we must let Him work in His own way, and observation shows that it is Divinely ordered that days of great action shall not be days of great spiritual stirring. I know of no periods in which conscious religion counted for less in English life than those of the Black Prince, of Elizabeth and of Wellington. Those were times comparable in achievement with our own ; let us not be surprised if there be in our day an apparent lack of interest in religion such as there was in theirs. If it be so, it comes from no personal fault of ours but from the nature of things, the working of deep and general causes.

Our notion, then, of the future, so far as we can foresee it, and the ideals which we frame in correspondence with that prospect, must be modest. We must take into account the general shortcomings of mankind, and also the certainty, if observation and thought have value as powers bestowed upon us from above, that the past will influence the future, and that the movement of the world will follow the same lines, as for

CONTINUITY OF THE CHURCH

instance in reaction against overwrought or exhausted sentiment, as it has followed in the past. In a spirit of caution, then, for the future and of allowance for the past and the present, I wish to draw your attention to two or three of the characteristics of our Church. Institutions, of a certain kind and on a certain scale, have descended to us, and we wish to make the best of them. We desire no change unless it be necessary, and if history shows that they have rendered service we wish them still to render it.

And first let me turn to one character of our Church system which is being severely criticised to-day—the size of our bishoprics. I need not dwell upon the practical objection ; the bishoprics are so large that their holders cannot exert a personal influence upon their flock, or even upon its pastors. But there is another objection which I do wish to discuss. It is historical. It is alleged that the primitive bishop was the pastor of his people, and that the parish system, as we know it, began in

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

the surrender by him of local authority over parts of his diocese to delegates of his own. On this hypothesis he is still, by a remove of only one degree, the personal pastor, and he is only resuming his original office when he brings himself into direct contact with his people. That is perfectly true, but it is true for only one half of ancient Christendom, and that the half to which we and our fathers have never belonged. It is true of the Mediterranean region. If we were to follow the line of St. Paul's journey to Rome, and to extend our survey to right and left as far as the same conditions extended, we should find dioceses of this kind, in which the bishop is the successor of the single original pastor. To-day, in what was the Kingdom of Naples, to take one instance only, there are bishoprics no larger than an English rural deanery, and provinces, with an archbishop over them, with the dimensions of an English archdeaconry. And I need not remind anyone who has looked into ancient Church history of the hundreds of bishoprics which existed in Roman Africa. This

CONTINUITY OF THE CHURCH

type of diocese, then, was abundant and primitive ; and it so happens that the region where it prevailed was that in which almost all the early Christian literature and the early Church law were composed. And so good people who look for examples in the past are apt to think that this must be our pattern, because this is the original system according to which the Church was organised.

In fact, it is only one of two systems, equally primitive and equally wide in their diffusion. The Faith did not spread by the Mediterranean route alone. It spread also by land from Syria to the north-west, and along that course everywhere, from Antioch to England, the sees are large. If we go back to the beginnings of Eastern Christianity we find the famous Ignatius of Antioch, martyred about 115, describing himself as " Bishop of Syria." It is as though he called himself Bishop of Scotland or of Wales. Three centuries later in the same region Theodoret, Bishop of Cyrus or Cyrrhus, a theologian of note, tells us that his diocese

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

contained 800 churches. He mentions it, not as an extraordinary thing or an undue burden, but while modestly recording the success of his labours. If we draw a line diagonally across Asia Minor from Syria to Constantinople, passing through Cappadocia, now forgotten but once a chief centre of Christian expansion ; if we continue the line from Constantinople to the head of the Adriatic, we shall find a regular succession of these great dioceses. From the point we have reached, we may journey westward either south or north of the Alps. If we take the former course, we shall find the great sees of Lombardy, such as Milan and Verona, quite English in their extent, in antiquity and to-day. If we follow the latter course, along the Danube and the northern frontiers of the Roman Empire, we shall find the same thing. And finally we discover it again in Gaul and in Spain ; there is evidence that the Christianity of most of Spain comes in the long run from this eastern source and along the route by land. And therefore we cannot

CONTINUITY OF THE CHURCH

be surprised that English dioceses follow the same type ; not that their direct origin is from Syria, but that the established pattern of diocese in the regions with which England was anciently in contact was after this larger scale.

We see, then, that Christendom from the first was governed after two fashions, equally primitive. In dioceses of the one class the parish arose through delegation by the bishop of some of his functions ; in the other he had no local functions to delegate, but strictly followed the example of the Apostles, supervising the Christian flocks, however they might have originated, over a wide region. And so, when we contemplate an English diocese, such as Lincoln was and York is, our thought must be, not what a perversion of the ancient office of bishop has taken place, but how primitive our present order is. For we and our fathers have never lived under the conditions of the Mediterranean expansion of Christianity ; we have grown up under the equally venerable influence of the other system, and our bishops

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

may regard themselves as working under the same immemorial conditions as the Syrian Ignatius and Theodoret.

And now, what is to be said for a system which links us so directly with the beginnings of our faith? My master in these studies was Bishop John Wordsworth, and he has stated, frequently and forcibly, his preference for dioceses large and few. The bishops are the working heads of the Church, and they must take counsel together if the Church, as fresh needs arise, is to have a considered policy. For effectual counsel and decision numbers must be small; a Cabinet, not a Parliament, is needed. Every reader of that masterpiece of biography, the "Life of Archbishop Benson," remembers the emphasis laid by the Archbishop upon this central function of the bishops, and his resentment against its neglect; a neglect too frequent, as he thought. And let me reinforce this point of view by words of the present Archbishop of Canterbury, written to Dr. Wilkinson on the eve of his appointment to Truro: "A bishop's position

CONTINUITY OF THE CHURCH

in the Church of England to-day is not a local one." If an English bishop were, primarily and by origin, the pastor of his people and not their superintendent, he could not be justified in assuming this dispersed and, so to say, impersonal position. But, since he has inherited it, he must take advantage of its opportunities.

The chief of these is that of leadership. The broader his range the more important is his utterance ; and after all there is no more trouble in composing an address that shall have a thousand readers when it is printed than one that shall have a hundred. His public is large, he is an exceptional man, and his words carry weight. In the great age of theological controversy the contrast is extraordinary between the stability and statesmanship of the bishops who had great sees and those who had small ones. The latter, we may say generally, were unworthy of their office ; it was from their regions that the trouble sprang. They had not the ballast of a great position, with the grave

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

sense of responsibility which it might have imparted. And in our day, when the individual is merging more and more his separate existence in that of the crowd, there is the greater scope for the bringing of influence to bear on numbers. The corporate conscience seems to be displacing the personal, and the psychology of the crowd is becoming one of our most important studies. The greater the numbers to which the bishop can appeal with authority, because with experience, the greater, from this point of view, is his opportunity. But to this end he must be relieved from sharing in, and competing with, the ordinary efforts of the clergy. And further, since his is not a local position, he must be free to spend more of his time in London for the general government of the Church. We are apt to forget how much of the time of bishops in the Caroline period, so often regarded as a golden age for the Church, was so spent.

This position of the English bishop, lonely if you like, descends to him. Let me take you to the beginnings of our Christianity. Each

CONTINUITY OF THE CHURCH

kingdom has one bishop, and that bishop is at the King's side as his monitor in all his undertakings. No council of the State is complete unless it has his presence and his assent to its decisions. His person, his property, have a protection accorded them equal—nay, sometimes superior, as in the Kentish laws of Ethelbert—to that which guards the King himself. The bishop is the representative not only of an awful religion but of a higher civilisation, and men are eager for the benefit of his advice and feel safe when he approves their action. And he, for his part, is very willing to use his opportunity. In a fierce age life and death, the sanctity of marriage, justice in many forms, may depend on the counsel that he shall give; young Christians are for the first time framing their codes of law, and he can suggest standards of righteousness and mercy. No wonder that he welcomes this opportunity of service, and accepts willingly its accessories. He receives the endowment that corresponds with his public position, and he accepts it because of the weight in

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

affairs of which it is the emblem and the recognition. If bishops to-day are vested in a faint survival of that distant grandeur, we may be proud that they retain an immemorial dignity and state, which is not only justly theirs but is actually a help to them in the execution of their high office. And if we are tempted to criticise, not them but their distant predecessors, for accepting such a social position, let us bear in mind that they would have disappointed the generous thoughts of their converts, and might even have undermined their confidence, had they rejected the natural desire of those converts to give a conspicuous proof of the value they set upon their spiritual guides. It is true that public authority became a temptation ; it has been a temptation in recent times. A few years ago the converts of a missionary, who did not belong to our communion, felt such enthusiasm for him that they made him the Prime Minister of their island State in the Pacific ; he used his authority with such indiscretion that a British gunboat had to

CONTINUITY OF THE CHURCH

remove him. And, in a wider sphere, the missionaries of Rome, doubtless with the best intentions, accepted from the Government of China the commanding rank of Mandarins. Napoleon III, eager for the clerical vote in France, had put pressure on the Chinese Government to confer this favour; a favour which the missionaries of all other communions most wisely refused. We see how natural it is, in certain phases of society and in certain political circumstances, that such privileges should be offered and accepted. We are not responsible for the acts of our forefathers, and it is quite certain that we, in their day, would have acted exactly as they did. But we are bound by their action, and we can see that its results, beneficial on the whole for them, are still more beneficial for us. The public status of the bishop is a part of our inheritance which has improved with age. As for the only practicable alternative, the suggestion that his economical position should be that of the heads of the Permanent Civil Service, it need only be

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

stated for its disastrous effect to appear. Instead of a recognised position which suggests and emphasises the inherent majesty of the office, it would give them an unhistorical and precarious position in the public mind. Bishops would have to stand on their dignity.

Since bishops, few and therefore great, have ever held in England this high position, we must consider what are the duties that we have a right to expect them to fulfil. They are duties of supervision over us, and of counsel on our behalf. They must be wiser than we are, and we must secure them the leisure to increase wisdom, and to employ it. We must not allow them to dissipate their energy over small occasions ; Bishop Creighton, I believe, resented the call upon him to “dedicate hassocks.” We must relieve them by calling into fuller activity those ancient constitutional officers of the Church, the archdeacons and rural deans. I wish I had time to dwell upon their history and their functions.

Let us assume, then, that our bishops will

CONTINUITY OF THE CHURCH

continue to be great and few ; with, of course, some moderate addition to their numbers as population increases. It remains to consider how they shall be appointed. History shows that in practice they have always been chosen much as they are now. There have been enough instances of free election by their chapters to cast a decent veil of fiction over the hard fact that bishops have generally been selected by the State. In early times this was obviously desirable. A man might excel in clerical virtues and yet have little capacity for holding his own among, and if need be against, rude holders of power. One reserve must be made. Where there is a chapter with a history behind it, a letter from the Crown recommends a person for election. It is true that there is a power in reserve which can override disobedience on the chapter's part, and that a penalty—no longer terrible—threatens a recalcitrant dean and chapter. But I am sure that the terror on the part of the Crown's representative would be greater, if election were

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

refused, than on the chapter's side. I cannot conceive of a chapter that would fear to reject an unworthy nominee; but I can readily imagine the fright of a Minister who had recommended a candidate so bad that the chapter was bound in conscience to reject him. They would be popular heroes, and our statesmen are only too prone to dread unpopularity. The right of election, then, is truly a power, though a power in reserve.

On the other hand, there is substantial advantage in the power of nomination to posts of national importance being in national hands. There is an impartial choice. Let me take an instance which is outside controversy, though I might choose others, equally cogent, about which strife might still arise. If the choice had been left to the conventional "good churchmen" of the day, Temple would never have been Bishop of Exeter. And a generation earlier an equal opportunity of wise selection was offered, and was rejected. The imagination and statesmanship which chose Temple

CONTINUITY OF THE CHURCH

would have elevated Newman or Pusey to the Episcopate. Unhappily the opportunity, to the lasting injury of our Church, was missed. There, again, the clergy and the "clerically minded" laity of the day, had the choice been in their hands, would infallibly have followed the same disastrous course which Lord Melbourne took in neglecting the men with whom the future lay; there was at any rate a possibility that a Prime Minister might have made the right choice.

There is practical advantage, then, in this impartial mode of selection. It has also the merit, as I have said, of venerable antiquity, and of conformity with the practice of a very great communion. Whatever its faults, the Roman Church is conservative of tradition. Let us consider its procedure. It works, where it can, by means of Concordat. Let me take an instance. Chili is the most stable, it is often called the most English, of South American Republics. It has a Concordat by which, when a see is vacant, the President of the Republic submits three names

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

to Rome. The Pope selects one, whose consecration depends on his being accepted by the Senate of the Republic. In France the process was more summary and the choice of the Government more absolute under a Concordat the abrogation of which was regarded as a cruel wrong to the Catholic cause. I will only remind you further that in Austria, the State in Europe with which the relations of the Papacy are most cordial and intimate, the Crown's power of selection is as complete as it is in England. On grounds of practical advantage, of historical continuity and of modern analogy, we may be well content to leave the selection of our bishops in the hands which now hold it.

Now I will leave these high topics, and descend to the rank and file of the clergy, to see what we may learn of continuity there. Historically the clergy are divided into two separate classes, the bishop's staff and the parish priests. At first they were equal in importance ; it is a humiliating thought for a canon of a cathedral how different is now the weight in

CONTINUITY OF THE CHURCH

the affairs of the Church of the two classes. Let us consider first what was the constitution of the missions which made England Christian. A bishop came accompanied by a body of clergy. They formed one corporation, the bishop being to the rest what the head of a college is to the fellows of his society. That is why, in theory, the chapter has always elected the bishop, as the fellows elect the head. The choice of bishop did not originally concern any but his cathedral clergy. But this was not the only resemblance of bishop and chapter to head and fellows. The administration of the diocese was the business of the corporation. Sometimes this was carried to lengths that seem strange to us. You know that North Germany was converted from England, and that its dioceses were organised on English lines. In one of those dioceses, Verden, no official act of the bishop was valid if it bore only the bishop's seal ; it had to be confirmed by the seal of the chapter. I can quote no example so striking from any English see, but this constitutional position of the

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

chapter as a check upon the bishop was in spirit, if not in degree, thoroughly English. Traces of it, however faint, may be discovered to-day, as when a bishop will call his "greater chapter" to advise him. Whether it be a survival or a revival, it is the reminiscence of a reality.

After the Norman Conquest the bishops found this share of the chapters in their affairs an irksome thing. They determined to be rid of it, and to break the partnership. Hitherto a joint estate had supported the whole body. The bishops, one after another, agreed with their chapters to divide the estate, and the privileges that went with it. The bishop should be his own master, the chapter should be independent. A number of these agreements have survived. The best known is that made by St. Osmund of Salisbury, but the terms made at York, at Carlisle almost as soon as the see was created, and elsewhere are also known. The new corporation was now, for all practical purposes, headless. The bishop did not want the chapter to interfere with him, and therefore

CONTINUITY OF THE CHURCH

he had surrendered his right to control it. Hence, very naturally, the chapters began to elect heads, or deans, for themselves ; a responsibility of which Henry VIII and his successors have relieved them. This new right of election compensated for their loss of the shadowy power of choosing the bishop. And indeed, since he was no longer, nor wished to be, their actual head, there was little reason why they should elect him.

So there came about, by the bishops' will, a severance between them and their chapters. Bishops gained power more uncontrolled, chapters new responsibility. And, strange as it seems to us, the bishops as the price of independence gave up a share of what we regard as peculiarly episcopal rights and duties. Not only did they surrender their whole practical rule over their cathedrals together with their claim to the services of what had once been their staff ; they actually divided their episcopal jurisdiction with the chapter. So many parishes as was agreed became subject to the cathedral

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

body. Sometimes the dean, sometimes dean and chapter, sometimes a single member of the chapter, was Ordinary, with right, for instance, of institution to the benefice. That state of affairs survived till 1836, so conservative are we English people. Please note that till recent years—I have myself known a clergyman who had been instituted by a dean of Salisbury—no one thought that this legal side of Church business was the sole affair of the bishop. It was so made by an Act of Parliament under William IV. And, since it is modern, we may venture to criticise it. As a matter of fact, the law has imposed upon the bishops a duty which they are not specially qualified to undertake. Small blame to men whose gift may be theology or eloquence or scholarship if they are destitute of the special interest in canon and common law which is needed for the efficient discharge of a legal function. It is common knowledge that few of the bishops have that interest, and an undue responsibility is cast upon their advisers, who

CONTINUITY OF THE CHURCH

are often amateurs in this very technical branch of the science of law, competent as they may be to draw a will or convey an estate. One of these gentlemen pathetically lamented to me the difficulties of his position. He did not know much about these things, but happily he had worked under a bishop who had mastered the subject. Therefore he had no responsibility, and had enjoyed his ministerial functions. Then a new prelate arose, and this good lawyer was in a tragical position. Small as his knowledge was, he knew more than the bishop, and he felt the burden of responsibility. Yet things need not be so. As we have seen, according to the custom of the English Church these legal duties might till 1836 be discharged by a dean or a modest prebendary. I do not propose that we should recur to that chaotic system. But why should any part of this duty fall upon the bishop? Our national tradition relieved the bishop of a great share in it—I should think that in Staffordshire almost half the parishes were exempt from the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Lichfield

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

—and we should be loyally following it if we relieved him of the whole of what is usually an uncongenial task, and one which often is ill discharged. And there would be a further advantage. An opening would be made for a class of trained canon lawyers ; and all the better if they were men in Holy Orders.

And now I come to the last point on which I wish to dwell—the parish clergy. Let us consider their history. The only great revolution in our ideas of English Church history that has taken place within my memory relates to them. It has been effected by a Swiss and a French scholar, and what I am going to say, though it may not be familiar to all, is now accepted by those who are competent to judge. The parish priest is older than Christianity. He is the direct heir and successor of the pagan priest whose office he took and whose endowment of glebe he retained. Let us consider the circumstances. The bishop, or one of his staff, converts a village ; we must remember that our ancestors were converted *en masse*,

CONTINUITY OF THE CHURCH

the whole community following its lord. Things were much the same as they are in parts of India to-day, though our modern missionaries, for good reasons, are shy of accepting untaught converts. The lord—lords of the village were universal when the Faith came to England, and the age of primitive liberty, if it ever existed, had long passed away—the lord and his people enter into the covenant of Christianity. How are they to be instructed and how is Christian worship to be maintained? Obviously the bishop cannot undertake the task; he must pass on. Nor can his staff do so. They have their home by the primitive cathedral and cannot be permanently absent. Then, again, what is to be done with the existing endowment for the priest? The lord is not so shabby as to do less for his new religion than for the old. A priest is needed, and the endowment is ready. Naturally the bishop is well pleased. Perhaps he is less content when he learns the terms on which this favour is to be granted; but at any rate he accepts them.

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

Those terms are that the priest of the new faith shall stand to the lord of the community, who in after ages was called the lord of the manor, in the exact position which the former priest had held. That pagan divine had been the nominee, the man, of the lord who appointed him, and who was also the owner of the temple in which he ministered. Till late in the Middle Ages it was held that the parish church, except its chancel, belonged to the lord of the manor, so deep a trace had this survival of paganism left upon our law. The history of the parish clergy follows, then, two lines. Along one they steadily gain freedom as against their lord, whose right has dwindled down to that of patronage. About patronage I will only say this, that a variety of patrons ensures a variety of teaching among those whom they nominate. Nothing, in a world of independent thought, could be more disastrous for the Church than that monotony of doctrine or practice should be officially prescribed. We have seen of late with what unhappy results whole dioceses have

CONTINUITY OF THE CHURCH

echoed the teaching of some resolute bishop or society, and some aspect of Christianity been indicated as its full and exclusive presentation.

So much for one side of the development of the parish clergy—their growth into independence of the lord or patron. Now for its other aspect, the increasing influence over them of the bishop. We must bear in mind that the original priests were not the bishop's men; they were directly dependent on their lord, and had no such relation to him as his own staff, his chapter, enjoyed. And there is little reason to think that the old bishops resented this want of authority. They were very willing, as we have seen, to abandon large sections of their dioceses to the jurisdiction of others. It was practically impossible in a roadless country overrun with forests to exercise an effectual supervision, even if the bishops thought it their duty to make the attempt. It was rarely made. So the priest, while he gained freedom as against his lord, did not lose freedom in his dealings with the bishop. The bishop has

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

gained, and justly gained, influence and authority ; he has never deprived the priest of his " parson's freehold." Think how venerable that freehold is. The bishop has never lost it to the priest, for he never possessed that freehold in the parishes of his diocese ; long ago the priest wrested it from the lord, and has successfully maintained it.

Much is being said against that " freehold," and to the current objections may be added the practice of the Roman Church. In that Church the freehold has almost disappeared ; the priest is, in the language of its canon law, "*amovibilis ad nutum.*" The bishop can remove him at will. It is true that the bishop himself is subject to pontifical caprice, and must resign his office if he displease the authority of Rome. Do we wish our clergy to be subjected to the same deadening control ? The attempt has been made. From time to time, ever since our Church reached years of discretion at the Reformation, new phases of religious thought have appeared, each as legitimate

CONTINUITY OF THE CHURCH

as its predecessor. Every time the rulers of the Church, representing the best opinion of the generation that was passing away, have attempted to suppress the innovation, and invariably they have been thwarted by the secure tenure of the beneficed innovators. Let me take one example. Early in the Oxford Movement Mr. Keble became rector of Hursley. The author of the "Christian Year" seemed a rebel and a heretic to Bishop Sumner of Winchester. But Keble was impregnable in his freehold, and the Bishop could only annoy him by keeping his assistant curate, the most orthodox of Anglicans as he would now appear, in deacons' orders. The freehold of the beneficed clergy saved the Oxford Movement; it had saved earlier movements and it will be needed to save later, for I fear that, whether or no we have another Keble, the race of Sumners is not extinct.

I have dealt with very few points in the constitution of our Church, but they are points of importance. It has peculiarities of structure

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

which may seem anomalous, which superficial common-sense may desire to abolish. But they have done good service in the past and are doing it to-day, and they have that historical sanction which every Englishman in his heart respects. I have suggested a certain relief to the bishops on the legal side of their work and a certain expansion of their work in its more public and statesmanlike aspects. They would retain that high authority which is in part secured to them by the limitation of their numbers, and which they would forfeit in favour of a quasi-popedom at Canterbury if they were reduced to insignificance by multiplication. Men of mark themselves, conversant with great issues of life and thought, they would be competent guides, and would find willing followers in a free and therefore a responsible and self-respecting clergy. Along such lines will our Church follow that course of ordered liberty which its history indicates as the path by which Englishmen are to be led into the full citizenship of the Kingdom of God.

THE ANGLICAN VERSION OF
CHRISTIANITY

By HERBERT HENSLEY HENSON, D.D.,
LORD BISHOP OF HEREFORD

SYNOPSIS

IN what sense an Anglican version of Christianity is really possible. Influence of Nationality on Christianity. Incoherence of Anglicanism defended by Anglican apologists, *e.g.*, Dean Church and Dr. Allen. Excessive laudation of Anglicanism not impressive. What material exists for determining the nature of the Anglican version of Christianity? Effect of Anglican system on average Englishmen. English Religion since the Reformation not "Catholic." Protestantism not the consequence of eighteenth-century torpor. George Herbert's religion, Protestant. Evidence of the Chaplains as to the Protestant character of soldiers' religion. Reformation implied a great impoverishment of English Religion. Hooker's *Ecclesiastical Polity*. Anglicanism not to be judged by the occasional offices in the Prayer-book. The Reformers did not minimise the changes they made. Demands of Devonshire rebels in 1549. Were the Reformers presenting a new version of Christianity? Unless some great spiritual advance was effected, the Reformation cannot possibly be justified. The "Protestant Religion" common to all the Reformed Churches, including the English. New prominence assigned to Bible the really determining innovation effected by the Reformers. The practical revolution grew from this principle. Hence the interpreters and apologists of Reformation were preachers. Revision of the forms of Ordination and Consecration. Character of the reformed Episcopate. Transformation of Anglicanism during the last two generations—probable causes. Difference between Anglo-Catholicism of seventeenth century and Tractarianism. How far can an Anglican version of Christianity persist under modern conditions? Some special advantages of Anglicanism. Only as a version of "the Protestant Religion" has Anglicanism a spiritual future.

THE ANGLICAN VERSION OF CHRISTIANITY

1. THE title of my lecture raises a grave question, and implies a serious assumption. How can there be an Anglican version of Christianity? Is not Christianity one and the same in all places and in all ages? In 1861 the famous Roman Catholic theologian, Ignatius von Döllinger, delivered lectures which were subsequently published, and which appeared in an English version, under the title "The Church and the Churches," in 1862. He represents Roman Catholics as repudiating fervently the notion of local or ethnical versions of the Faith :

"These say unanimously, 'Our Christianity shall have no national supplementary flavour; it shall be no especial German, or Italian, or French, or English or Russian Christianity—it shall not tickle

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

the palate of this or that people, like a fiery artificially prepared potation ; our doctrine, our religious practice, shall be and is a pure, clear stream of running water, colourless and odourless, the universal, wholesome drink for all, to-day as yesterday, to-morrow as a thousand years gone by. The Pope cannot, dare not teach otherwise than as those two hundred millions believe, and have long believed.' ”

Before ten years had passed the ardent writer of these confident words was deep in a vehement conflict against doctrinal change of the utmost gravity, which created a schism, and immersed himself in excommunication.

Such persistence and uniformity as the eloquent divine pictured are not for this world. Dryden's description of the true Church was good controversy but bad history :

“ One in herself, not rent by schism but sound,
Entire, one solid shining diamond ;
Not sparkles shatter'd into sects like you :
One is the Church, and must be to be true :
One central principle of unity.

ANGLICAN CHRISTIANITY

As undivided, so from errors free,
As one in faith, so one in sanctity.
Thus one, thus pure, behold her largely spread,
Like the fair ocean from her mother's bed ;
From east to west triumphantly she rides,
All shores are watered by her wealthy tides.
The Gospel sound, diffused from pole to pole,
Where winds can carry, and where waves can roll,
The self-same doctrine of the sacred page
Convey'd to every clime, in every age."

—(v. "The Hind and the Panther," Part II, 526 f.)

There is, of course, a sense in which Christianity is always the same. The Vincentian Canon, suicidal in the hands of the controversialists of the Churches, has application to the religion which can never be other than it was at the first, "*quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus*," "The Faith once for all delivered to the Saints." The Revelation of God in Christ was in a true sense complete when the historic career of the Son of Man had run its course. But the understanding of the revealed Truth has varied wonderfully, and its full content and right application have been, and are still being, gradually disclosed through a long and

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

continuing Christian experience. It is mere matter of fact that Christianity emerges on to the arena of the modern world in many versions, among which that which is called Anglican can hardly be refused a place.

2. When we examine these distinct varieties of the common religion, we are quickly carried to the potent and baffling factor which we call Nationality. The Churches are inevitably national, and their distinctiveness reflects national idiosyncrasy. But nationality is the highly complex product of many forces—race, soil, climate, geographical situation, history, religion—and of these religion is assuredly not the least influential. Every modern version of Christianity carries the stamp of the human material on which it has acted. There is a give-and-take in the evolution of religious types. The Church shapes the Nation, and the Nation shapes the Church.

It is no mere accident that the Reformation failed to establish itself within the frontiers of the Latin world: that in France, where

ANGLICAN CHRISTIANITY

a national version of Catholicism did flourish for a while, the triumph of the Vatican has involved the definite secularisation of the State : that the Papacy itself is " the ghost of the Roman Empire sitting crowned on the grave thereof " : that ecclesiastical systems, ancient and modern, have conformed with astonishing fidelity to the political models which were at hand : that the Canon Law is but a clerical copy of the Civil Code : that the Scottish Covenants are but the older Scottish " Bands " surviving in a religious form : that nations and classes have imposed their distinctive habit and temper on the religious institutions which they have accepted.

3. It has been maintained, however, that the Church of England stands outside the argument because the utter political subordination into which it was brought at the Reformation, and the unique incoherence of its formal system, make anything like a definite version of Christianity out of the question. Döllinger states the case thus :

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

“ The Anglican Church is distinguished from all other Protestant Churches in this, that they possess in their symbolic books at least the possibility of unity of doctrine, and a corresponding ecclesiastical life . . . But the English Church has the germ of discord and ecclesiastical dissolution in its normal condition, and in its Confessions of Faith. It is a collection of heterogeneous theological propositions, tied together by the Act of Uniformity ; but which, in a logical mind, cannot exist by the side of one another, and whose effect upon the English Churchman is, that he finds himself involved in continual contradictions and disingenuousness, and can only escape the painful consciousness by sophistical reasoning.”¹

This is a hostile description of a character which Anglican writers have not only admitted but even exulted in. Dean Church, for example, contrasts the “ hand-to-mouth policy

v. “ The Church and the Churches,” p. 159.

ANGLICAN CHRISTIANITY

of experiment ” adopted by the English Reformers with the more rational and thorough-going procedure both of the Tridentine Council and of the Protestants of the Continent.

“ with a kind of gallant contempt for the protection of a theory, we in England shaped our measures as well as we could, to suit the emergencies which at the moment most compelled the attention of the steersman at the helm. The English Reformation ventured on its tremendous undertaking—the attempt to make the Church theologically, politically, socially different, while keeping it historically and essentially the same—with what seems the most slender outfit of appliances. Principles it had ; but they were very partially explored, applied, followed out to consequences, harmonised, limited. It sprung from an idea, a great and solid one, even though dimly comprehended, but not from a theory or a system, such as that unfolded in Calvin’s Institutes.

“ It has been called a *via media*, a compromise. It is more true to fact to say

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

that what was in the thought of those who guided it under Henry VIII and Elizabeth was an attempt, genuine though rude and rough and not always successful, to look all round the subject ; to embrace in one compass as many advantages as they could—perhaps incompatible and inconsistent ones—without much regard to producible and harmonising theories : antiquity and novelty, control and freedom, ecclesiastical and civil authority, the staid order of a Church as old as the nation and the vigour of a modern revolution of the age of the Renaissance, a very strong public government with an equally strong private fervour and enthusiasm ; to stimulate conscience and the sense of individual responsibility, and yet to keep them from bursting all bounds ; to overthrow a vast ancient power, strong in its very abuses and intrenched behind the prejudices as well as the great deeds of centuries, and yet to save the sensitive, delicate instincts of loyalty, reverence, and obedience ; to make room in the same system of teaching for the venerable language of ancient

ANGLICAN CHRISTIANITY

Fathers, and also for the new learning of famous modern authorities.”¹

The Dean of St. Paul's was a disciple of the Tractarians, though cast in a larger mould than his teachers, and his language is designed to lead to the Tractarian conclusion. But the same admission of Anglican incoherence, and an even more complete satisfaction with it, are expressed by a well-known American divine, who might fairly be called a Latitudinarian in the older and juster sense of that honourable but depraved description. Dr. Allen writes :

“ The influence of Erasmus was felt in England more powerfully than in his own country, and the Erasmian tendency was toward the ethical and undogmatic side of the Christian faith as brought out in his *Enchiridion*. During the first half of the sixteenth century the warfare was kept up against the old scholastic dogmatism till it became discredited and

¹ *ϕ*. “ Pascal and other Sermons,” p. 66 f.”

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

fell into the obloquy from which it has never emerged. This dogmatic bondage was one of the evils which the men of the 'new learning' were seeking to overcome; among them Cranmer, the Archbishop of Canterbury, to whom we owe the Book of Common Prayer, and whose influence pervades the Thirty-nine Articles. The result is a certain undogmatic character in the formularies of the Anglican Church, which has been one of its greater charms for thoughtful minds. The Christian verities are there and each in its due proportion, but they are stated in undogmatic ways, in the language of religion and life, rather than of theology. . . . The Anglican Church became in consequence the most comprehensive church in Christendom, free in spirit and in truth, trusting to the instincts which demand the Christian faith in its simplicity, and for the rest, building upon and appealing to 'sound learning' as at once her justification and defence. What Lord Bacon was to science in opening up a new world of thought and research, free from

ANGLICAN CHRISTIANITY

the trammels of the preceding ages, that the Church of England was for true religion and piety and a consecrated learning, whose aim was truth and reality as more important than any figments of imagination however imposing.”¹

Dr. Allen proceeds to contrast “the undogmatic attitude of the Church of England” with the attitude of doctrinal precision adopted by the other Churches—Roman, Greek, and Protestant. The late Bishop Creighton was accustomed to describe the Anglican system in similar terms, though he dwelt rather on the incoherence and comprehensiveness implicit in its national character than on the distinctive attitude expressed in its formularies. If the ardour of its apologists could ever remedy the defects of a system, or guarantee its soundness, assuredly Anglicanism would be sufficiently perfect, for no system has stirred more admiration in its adherents, or moved them to more exalted panegyrics. It must

¹ *v.* “Freedom in the Church,” p. 13 f.

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

be admitted, however, that this literature of self-admiration, never really effective, has become rather tiresome. The late Archbishop Benson was accustomed to use language about the Church of England which only the evident sincerity of the speaker could redeem from actual grotesqueness.

“The whole divine learning of the Catholic Church,” he says gravely, “has no successor unless it be here among us,” and proceeds, with no apparent consciousness of incongruity, to utter a warning against “advertisement, self-publication, willingness to be paraded.”

“May no changes, no difficulties, no struggles against depression, lead us to self-assertion or even to ‘apologia.’ May the English Churchman never forget that these are to be his graces—industry, prudence, forethought, moderation, noiselessness.”¹

Opponents have not been reconciled, nor critics silenced, by such self-complimentary

¹ v. “Fishers of Men,” p. 144 ff.

ANGLICAN CHRISTIANITY

apologies. "When," wrote Newman, still a zealous Anglican, "we profess our

Via Media, as the very truth of the Apostles, we seem to bystanders to be mere antiquarians or pedants amusing ourselves with illusions or learned subtleties and unable to grapple with things as they are."¹

4. A recent convert to the Roman Church has expressed the same attitude when he writes of the system, which he had decided to abandon,

"Anglicanism, generally speaking, is not a system of religion, nor a body of truth, but a feeling, a tradition, its roots intertwined with associations of national history and of family life; you do not learn it, you grow into it; you do not forget it, you grow out of it."²

Mr. Ronald Knox goes far, however, to

¹ v. "Via Media," i. 17.

² v. "Spiritual Aeneid," p. 20.

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

discount his own verdict by admitting that "the Anglicanism of Hooker and the Laudian divines, based carefully on Scripture and tradition, was capable of being worked out as a system, and might be boiled down into a penny catechism"—which he appears to think are the conditions of theological soundness. It is "the Anglicanism of to-day" which he has in view, and even from this he is good enough to make an exception in favour of "people definitely under the influence of the Oxford Movement." These apparently have a version of Christianity, but an indefensible one. It must, I think, be admitted that Mr. Knox was hardly fair to the Church of his baptism, and had (to use a plain expression) never given it a chance. His ingenuous description of himself suggests that as a clergyman he was never in any valid sense an Anglican at all :

"I had lived so long in the atmosphere of believing in everything Roman except one—the duty of not being an Anglican

ANGLICAN CHRISTIANITY

—that I had come to imagine the Church of Rome demanded no more as a test of membership than a decent doubt about Anglicanism.”¹

5. It would, indeed, be very strange if there were no Anglican version of Christianity, for there is no stronger national type than the English, and in no national history has Christianity played a larger part. In point of fact, as friends and foes agree to admit, the National Church is markedly different from any other Church. It would be strange if the uniqueness of the ecclesiastical system had not expressed and fashioned a specific type of Christianity. When, assuming the existence of such a type, we inquire what precisely is its character, we are confronted by the necessity of deciding what we shall accept as evidence. What material exists for determining the nature of the Anglican version of Christianity? There are the formularies of the Church of England, and its legal system :

¹ *l.c.*, 201.

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

there is the history of nearly four centuries which discloses how those formularies have been interpreted, and what kind of practice they have induced in English Churchmen : there is the theological literature of Anglicanism, and its voluminous controversy : finally, there is the Anglicanism of the present day, which we know, and profess. Which in the long and varied line of famous Anglicans are the truly typical figures ? In what sense, if any, can Cranmer, Andrewes, Williams, Abbott, Laud, Chillingworth, Jeremy Taylor, Burnet, Sancroft, Tillotson, Butler, Warburton, Paley, Pusey, Simeon, Stanley, Maurice, Wilberforce, the Latitudinarians, the Evangelicals, the Tractarians, the Rationalists, the Christian Socialists, the Modernists, be said to represent one and the same Anglican version of Christianity ? Would it not be truer to say that there is no single Anglican version, but a variety of Christian types loosely linked together by a common adhesion to the same large and rather incoherent system ?

ANGLICAN CHRISTIANITY

6. The best evidence of the true character of a religious system is the effect it has upon the average human material upon which it works. If, then, we would know what the Anglican system is, we must inquire what, as a matter of fact, have been those whom it has trained and taught. Now, however variously the formularies of the Church of England may be interpreted, there is no possibility of disagreement as to the kind of Christianity which they have fostered in the English people. It is certainly not what is commonly called Catholic. From the time of Elizabeth up to the middle of the nineteenth century the ordinary English Churchman has gloried in the name of Protestant, and for the most part does so still, although the extraordinary repugnance now displayed in clerical circles to this famous description has led to a general avoidance of it in ecclesiastical discussions. The name did truly describe the average English Churchman's religion.

It never has been "Catholic" since the

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

Reformation. The identifying features of Catholic religion are absent from it. The Mass, auricular confession, monasticism, devotions to the Saints, prayers for the dead—all are wanting. Industrious antiquarians may accumulate instances of the survival of some medieval religious practices here and there, but broadly the general features of medieval religion disappeared in the middle of the sixteenth century, only to reappear as the symbols of a reviving medievalism in the middle of the nineteenth. It is not the case that the protestant habit of English Churchmen is the result of the depressing tradition of the latitudinarian eighteenth century. In that age a kind of torpor spread over all Christendom. It is quite as evident on the Continent as in England. Roman Catholics and Nonconformists felt its numbing influence quite as much as Anglicans. The bad temper of that age lowered, but did not alter, the type of English religion. Take such an Anglican classic as George Herbert's

ANGLICAN CHRISTIANITY

“Country Parson,” and consider what kind of religion would be fostered by such a ministry as he describes. It is not Catholic. Herbert’s parishioners would be urged to regular attendance at mattins and evensong. The sermon, an hour long at the least, would be the principal event of the day, though the catechising at evensong seemed in the minister’s estimate not less important. The Holy Communion would be celebrated “if not duly once a month, yet at least five or six times in the year.” Great importance would be attached to a reverent demeanour in church, a regular and careful domestic devotion, the reading of the Bible, and the duties of neighbourliness. The rubrics of the Prayer-book are accepted as the lines of pastoral duty. Except in the case of the sick, confession has no place in the parochial system; and fasting, which the minister observes in his own house, is very liberally interpreted. We are not surprised to find that Richard Baxter refers with marked approval to George Herbert’s picture of pas-

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

toral work, which indeed was closely accordant with his own. The two men may stand for the very best types of English religion. Neither is fitly to be described as other than Protestant. English religion, moreover, appears to retain this Protestant character. If we may attach importance to the accounts which the chaplains are sending home, we must needs conclude that two generations of Tractarian effort have not succeeded in effecting any considerable change in the religion of the English people. From the parish churches, and the parish schools, the people have received a rather vague Christianity of the Protestant type, which finds itself most at home in the tolerant, undogmatic, evangelical atmosphere of the Y.M.C.A. "While religion means something," writes a naval chaplain, "the sacramental system of the Prayer-book means little or nothing." The men "know that the Church of England differs in some important respects from the Roman Catholic Church: though they might find it difficult to define any one

ANGLICAN CHRISTIANITY

of these respects precisely. But they often have no idea that it differs to any real extent from any of the Protestant Nonconformist bodies. The Church's sacramental beliefs seem to be outside their horizon altogether."¹

Mr. Malden regards this as "a deplorable state of affairs," and thinks that "the religion of the Prayer-book has got to be built up again from the very beginning." But it may be the case that the English laity have understood the genius of the English Church better than he thinks.

"The religion of England considered, not only as established by law, but as rooted in the nation, and generally embraced, is that which is called Protestant, and is no other than Christianity recovered out of the anti-Christian apostasy, and reformed from the corruption of later ages after the primitive purity, receiving the holy Scriptures as the perfect rule of Christian faith and life"—

¹ v. Rev. R. H. Malden, *Watchman, what of the Night?* pp. 2, 98.

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

that is the language of a pamphlet written in 1667. It may stand as an essentially true description of English popular religion in 1918. It describes a version of "the Protestant Religion."¹

7. For the ordinary Englishman at the time it must be allowed that the first consequence of the Reformation was a great impoverishment of religion. The new system had a mean and even squalid appearance beside the old. Instead of a Catholic Church headed by the successor of St. Peter, and wielding by Divine right authority over the nations, there was a rather incoherent local institution, "the King's English Church and congregation," as Henry VIII called it, which seemed to take a perverse pride in parading its limitations. Instead of the rich and varied tradition of medieval religion, which touched life at every point, clothing it with an imaginative symbolism, redeeming its vulgarity, and re-

¹ v. "*A discourse of the Religion of England, asserting that Reformed Christianity settled in its due latitude is the stability and advancement of this Kingdom.*"

ANGLICAN CHRISTIANITY

lieving its routine, there were the cold and unfamiliar forms of the Prayer-book eked out with limitless sermons and homilies. The land was covered with ruins, forlornly reminiscent of a glory that had passed away. On every hand stood the gaunt and crumbling monasteries, void and defamed, where once an ordered devotion, a splendid worship, and a generous hospitality had made religion honourable. Only the cathedrals and parish churches remained, and they had been stripped, mutilated, and impoverished. Christianity shrank visibly into a smaller thing. The Church played a humbler rôle in England. But the Nation reacted on the Church, to which it lent the *éclat* of its own triumphs. Politics and controversy were the twin influences under which this naked framework of a national church became substantial, intelligible, and self-conscious. Hooker's "*Ecclesiastical Polity*," composed in the years of patriotic exultation which followed the defeat of the Armada, discloses a version of Chris-

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

tianity, avowedly and almost proudly Anglican, which is no longer tentative and hesitating, but commands the deliberate assent of reflecting and learned Englishmen, stirs a grave and tenacious loyalty and secures a permanent and honourable place in the world-scheme of Christianity. The religion of Hooker could hardly have found a home in a new ecclesiastical system. It required the largeness and dignity of the old, for it expressed, not the thought of a prevailing individual, nor the mind of a triumphant faction, but the spirit of an ancient people at the supreme hour of its awakening. And the old ecclesiastical system unquestionably did survive. In spite of the drastic changes, the framework of medieval religion was not destroyed. The people continued to worship God, though in novel ways, in the same venerated fabrics, and on the same weekly festival. Some at least, and they the greater, of the annual commemorations were observed. The parish clergy, who for the most part accepted the

ANGLICAN CHRISTIANITY

changes of religion with strange facility, went on living in the same houses, possessed of the same property in tithes and glebes, pledged by that prosaic fact to maintain the identity of the new system with the old, and in many cases very anxious to assimilate as far as they could the services of the Prayer-book to those which they had used in former times. There was indeed a real, though a rather delusive, identity in the services, enough to permit a closer identity in the minds of ministers and worshippers, who loved the older system. The religious duties of the people remained. Still marriage was celebrated with familiar ceremonies, the babes were baptized at the old fonts, and signed with the Cross ; their mothers were churched after child-birth, the children (very occasionally) were confirmed by the bishop, the dead were buried with solemn rites. Since thus the actions were continued, it was easy to ignore or forget the new intention and phraseology of the forms. Mr. Gladstone has left it

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

on record that he received his "first introduction to the august conception of the Church of Christ" in Naples when "something set him on examining the occasional offices in the Prayer-book."¹

The student of Anglicanism must seek its distinctive features elsewhere than in the occasional offices, but it is the case that these touched the life of the common people very closely, and fostered in their minds the sense of a continuing fellowship with the ancient Church, which not even the violence of reforming Governments could destroy. At least the popular acceptance of the new arrangements was greatly facilitated, though the religious revolution implied in them was apparent and extreme. Anglicanism can hardly be appraised justly until the extent and the nature of that revolution are understood.

8. It requires, indeed, an effort of the historic imagination to recover a true picture of the tremendous change which the Anglican

¹ v. Morley's *Life*, Vol. I, p. 87.

ANGLICAN CHRISTIANITY

formularies imply, for few except special students are familiar with the formularies which were cast aside, and the Prayer-book, as we know it now, has been subjected for more than two generations to a subtle revision designed, almost confessedly, to alter its original character, and to bring it into harmony with the very ideas and procedures which it was intended to correct or abolish.¹ It is, however, quite impossible to form a just estimate of the religious system expressed in the Prayer-book without an adequate knowledge of the contrast it presented to the immemorial Christianity of the nation. The Reformers, to do them justice, did not attempt to minimise the changes which they were introducing with such roughness and so suddenly. They did not pretend that their doctrine was essentially identical with the old; such a contention

¹ The impression which the Prayer-book makes on candid and intelligent Catholics may be seen in the "Russian Observations on the American Prayer Book," edited by Dr. Frere for "The Alcuin Club." The list of changes required to make the book tolerable to Catholics is particularly illuminating. v. pp. 34, 35.

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

belongs to the later time of apologetic controversy. They preferred to dwell on the completeness of the contrast which the newly-discovered "Gospel" presented to the elaborate and ancient system of "Popery." They enlarged on the depth and grossness of the popular superstition, on the far-extended corruption implied in the Pope's usurped dominion, on the marvellous Providence which had brought the truth to light after a millennium of obscurity, on the soul-destroying character of the whole tradition of popular Religion. That pathetic document, the demands of the Devonshire rebels in 1549, throws a strong light on the public mind at the point when the nature of the Reformation began to be disclosed too clearly for any misunderstanding. Give us back—such is the substance of the document—the dear and familiar things by which our souls live. We can make nothing of this strange new religion which you have thrust into the parishes. We want again the Mass in Latin, the tonsured celibate

ANGLICAN CHRISTIANITY

priests, the Confessional, the worship of the Reserved Sacrament where it hangs above the high altar, the prayers for the dead, the holy bread and holy water, the palms, ashes, images, "and all other ancient old ceremonies used heretofore by our mother holy Church." It is, indeed, difficult to exaggerate the decisiveness of the change which transformed the whole external aspect of English religion. Perhaps the best method of bringing the facts home to the mind is to be at the pains to work through the accounts of an old parish, such as St. Margaret's, Westminster. The whole tragedy of violent and brutal innovation rises before your mind, as you follow the prosaic record of demolition and transformation. The poor churchwardens hardly know how to keep pace with the orders which come to them. We see the parish church stripped bare, its painted windows shattered, its stone altars broken down, its vestments and ornaments destroyed, or sold, or cast aside. From the point of view of the average parishioner "old

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

things had passed away : all things had become new."

9. How far was the popular impression justified ? When the Reformers had at length succeeded in getting their revised system to work, was it the case that a new version of Christianity was being presented to the English people ? Is the type of Christianity which the Prayer-book, articles, homilies, injunctions, etc., combine to fashion identical with that which the medieval Church had fashioned ? Did the Church of England in 1600 express the same conception of Christianity as in 1500 ? Was the devout Englishman's scheme of religious duty cast in the same mould ? Were the broad lines of his religious obligation maintained ? It is not sufficient answer to point out the unique excellence of the Prayer-book, the primitive sources from which its contents are generally derived, the exquisite simplicity and dignity of its language, the almost unchallenged primacy which it has obtained in the literature of devotion. It

ANGLICAN CHRISTIANITY

is properly irrelevant to discuss the succession of the English bishops, or the validity of their ordinations, for these have no direct bearing on the type of Christianity which the Reformed Church preached and fostered. What can be placed against the enormous cost of the Reformation? For, assuredly, unless some great spiritual advance was effected, no words of condemnation could be too severe for the Reformers and their work. Contrasting the religion of the Reformed Church of England with that of the medieval Church, we can see at once that it belongs to a different category. It expresses what has been called "the Protestant religion," that is, the version of Christianity which was, with whatever variations in matters of minor importance, common to all the Reformed Churches.¹

¹ Cf. the language of the Address presented by the Convocation to William III. in 1689. After much wrangling the Sacred Synod agreed to thank the King "for the pious zeal & care your majesty is pleased to express for the honour, peace, advantage, & establishment of the Church of England: whereby we doubt not, the interest of the protestant religion in all other protestant churches, which is dear to us, will be the better secured &c." v. Cardwell's

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

It is unfortunate that the word "Protestant" has become associated in the Anglican mind with so many acute and yet trivial controversies that its use in connection with the Church of England is sure to be regarded as provocative by a large body of Anglicans. But there is no substitute for the phrase "the Protestant religion" when it is attempted to define Anglicanism. The Reformation was essentially a conflict between two conceptions or versions of Christianity, the one which was expressed in the ancient ecclesiastical system of Europe, the other which was developed as a reasoned repudiation of the medieval tradition. In 1899 the Bishop of Oxford, Dr. Stubbs, discussed with some care the application of the term "Protestant." He wrote as an avowed representative of "High" Churchmanship, and he expressed himself with considerable warmth in opposition

"Synodalia," vol. ii, p. 698. I may, perhaps, refer to my "Robert Lee Lecture, 1911," on "The Relation of the Church of England to the other Reformed Churches" (William Blackwood and Sons).

ANGLICAN CHRISTIANITY

to the "Protestant" agitation which was proceeding in the country. He emphasised the distinctive features of the Church of England, and her retention, alone among the Reformed Churches, of what he called "Catholic identity." But he spoke in no hesitating manner of the Protestantism of Anglican religion; and he condemned in the strongest way "the idea that would repudiate the name of Protestant as a mere name of negation." He held "the Protestant Religion" to be "the historical and reasonable expression for collective application." The Anglican version of Christianity, it is important to insist upon, is also a version of "the Protestant Religion." This character of Anglicanism was freely admitted, nay, proudly claimed, by the leading English divines, who loved to dwell on the essential agreement in doctrine of all the Reformed Churches. An almost official character attached to the "Harmony of Protestant Confessions," published at Geneva in 1581, which included the Thirty-nine Articles. It

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

was indeed an essential part of the case against Rome that the Reformers were not a set of wilful individualists, but that, agreeing in a common submission to the Word written, they agreed also in the vital truths which shone so plainly from its pages that no sincere reader could miss them. As the conflict with Rome became more acute, and whenever the peril from Rome became more apparent, this consciousness of essential agreement became clearer, and received more emphatic expression. When the Protestant world fell into schism between Lutherans and Calvinists, it was with the latter, the Reformed as they were specifically called, that Anglicans were reckoned. Hooker calls the Lutheran Churches "the chiefest instruments of our salvation," but, when he quotes "the best learned of our profession," he mostly limits himself to Calvinists. South, a century later, echoed the general sense of English Churchmen when he describes the Church of England as "the best and surest bulwark of Protestantism,

ANGLICAN CHRISTIANITY

the glory of the Reformation, and the express image of the purest antiquity," "the only thing that makes Protestantism considerable in Christendom." When therefore the Tractarians denounced the Reformation and repudiated Protestantism, they were speaking a new language, and were not unjustly accused by their contemporaries of going back on the tradition of the Church of England, and preaching novelties. Even as late as 1880 the same point of view survived at Lambeth. Archbishop Tait's charge contained the following declaration which reads oddly to-day :

"I have certainly never experienced any unwillingness on the part of our countrymen without our pale to pay to the Church of England that deference which all Protestant Christendom awards it, as the chief bulwark of the reformed faith against the assaults on one side of superstition, and, on the other, of an aggressive infidelity."¹

¹ v. "The Church and the Future," p 19

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

10. The really determining innovation effected by the Reformers was the new prominence assigned to the Bible in the scheme of Christianity. This was the common feature of all the Protestant or Reformed systems which stamped a family likeness on them all. For this new prominence drew with it a new treatment of the Creeds, a new estimate of the Church, and a new conception of the ministry. Let any candid student be at the pains to study the Anglican standards, and to appreciate the difference between them and what they replaced, and he will be little disposed to object to Chillingworth's famous formula—"The Bible, and the Bible only, is the religion of Protestants"—as a rough but not essentially misleading description of the Anglican version of "the Protestant Religion." In no other Reformed Church do the Scriptures have so large a place in the appointed worship of the congregations. The lessons from the Old and New Testaments are arranged on the principle that the Bible,

ANGLICAN CHRISTIANITY

the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible, shall be read in the churches. No liberty is left to the minister to pick and choose. It was not until the year 1872 that even episcopal authority could authorise a departure from the statutory lessons. Modern objections to the choice of lessons would have received scant consideration from the authors of the Prayer-book, for they presuppose a view of Scripture as yet undreamed of. Ordinarily, the English congregations heard at the principal service on Sunday morning not only the lessons and the psalms, but also the Epistle and Gospel for the day. From the middle of the sixteenth century to the middle of the nineteenth the first part of the Order for Holy Communion was read according to the rubric as part of the ordinary service; and this fact, perhaps, explains the introduction of the Ten Commandments, which, however superfluous as addressed to small assemblies of regular communicants at 8 o'clock on Sunday morning, are by no means

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

unsuitable or unedifying when addressed to the general congregation.

II. The changes which really altered the working system of the Church—the use of the vernacular in the public services, the abolition of the Mass and the Confessional, the marriage of the clergy, the sudden abolition of the accustomed methods of popular devotion such as pilgrimages, the cultus of saints, relic worship, and the like—were all based on the new doctrine of the paramountcy of Scripture. Nothing could bring home to the people more clearly the subordination of Church to Bible. They saw the immemorial system of religion, endeared to them by countless associations, bound into the texture of their lives at every point, transformed beyond recognition on the plea that a higher authority than that of the Church required the change. It followed that the interpreters and apologists of the Reformation were preachers, and that the Reformed ministry was pre-eminently a ministry of the Word. So strongly was this

ANGLICAN CHRISTIANITY

character of the ministry emphasised that there were many Reformers who could not bring themselves to recognise any validity in the older type of ministry. How could "sacrificing priests" be genuinely ministers of a religion which possessed no Sacrifice but that of Calvary, and disallowed any priesthood save that which was common to all true believers? The discrepancy between the official doctrine of the Christian ministry and the actual belief of the mass of parish priests was never wider than in the reign of Elizabeth. Would it be altogether untrue to say that in this respect our generation has witnessed a curious return to the same situation?

12. The decay of interest in theology, and the novel prominence now ascribed to ecclesiastical machinery, may well hinder the modern Anglican from appreciating justly the work of the Reformers. It is, of course, the case that the ancient episcopal ministry was continued in the Reformed Church of England, but it is not less the case that great pains

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

were taken to change its character and revise its functions. The governing assumption of the Reformation, viz., the sole supremacy of Scripture in essentials, was carefully guarded. The four minor orders, which were plainly destitute of Scriptural warrant, were swept away altogether. The forms of ordination to the priesthood and consecration to the episcopate were drastically revised. When the changes are fairly considered, their intention and effect can hardly be questioned. They were designed to bring back the ministry into harmony with the teaching of the New Testament by removing whatever suggested a character or functions which could not be reconciled with the Mind of Christ. The English Reformers did not hold with the Puritans that the whole plan of ecclesiastical government had been prescribed in the Bible. They were wisely insistent on limiting to essentials the reference to Scripture which they made; but they were bound on their own principle not to suffer in the traditional

ANGLICAN CHRISTIANITY

system the survival of elements which conflicted with the Gospel. Everything that suggested priestly character or functions was swept away. The name "priest" indeed survived, but it no longer carried the old meaning. Archbishop Whitgift defended it thus :

"I am not greatly delighted with the name, nor so desirous to maintain it ; but yet a truth is to be defended. I read in the old fathers that these two names sacerdos and presbyter be confounded. I see also that the learned and the best of our English writers, such I mean as write in these our days, translate this word presbyter so ; and the very word itself, as it is used in our English tongue, soundeth the word presbyter. As heretofore use hath made it to be taken for a sacrificer, so will use now alter that signification, and make it to be taken for a minister of the Gospel. But it is mere vanity to contend for the name when we agree of the thing ; the name

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

may be used, and not used, without any great offence.”¹

There was no more any vesting with the chasuble, the *vestis sacerdotalis*; the hands were no longer blessed and anointed; the chalice and paten ceased to be symbols of office. Instead of all these the English priest received the Bible as the single and sufficient symbol of his ministry. The commission to “remit” or “retain” sins, introduced into the Ordinal in the course of the Middle Ages, was preserved as being indisputably Scriptural; but the abolition of the old discipline of the Confessional indicated the new sense in which that commission was now understood. Not less significant were the changes introduced into the consecration of bishops. Not only were the symbols of office—the pastoral staff, the ring, and the mitre—omitted, but the solemn anointing was removed, and the formulæ which belonged

¹ *v. Works*, Vol. III, p. 351 (Parker Society’s edition).

ANGLICAN CHRISTIANITY

to all these significant elements of the service were cut out. For the bishop as for the priest, the only symbol of office was the Bible. More significant still was the change in the questions which the bishop-elect had to answer. Instead of an elaborate examination in the articles of the Creed, there was substituted a series of pledges relating to the Holy Scripture. These were repeated almost verbatim from the pledges now taken from the priest, from whom heretofore no pledges had been taken. The gulf which had parted the bishop from the priest in the medieval system was thus bridged. Both were to be henceforth so far placed on the same level as alike ministers of the Word and guardians of the Faith. The English Reformers appear to have taken for granted that theory of the Episcopate, which had rarely lacked advocates in the Middle Ages, and which claimed to rest on the high authority of St. Jerome. On this view "the functions of the bishop and presbyter are regarded as substantially the same

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

in kind, though different in degree, while the functions of the diaconate are separate from both.”¹ Essentially bishops and presbyters formed but a single order.² Hence in the long controversy with the presbyterians the central point was that of “parity” or “imparity” of ministers. On this point the Lutheran Churches were held to support the English view. So Laud himself argued, when his opponents urged that episcopacy was confined to England and “the other form of government received, maintained, and practised in all other Reformed Churches.” This, he urged, was not the case

“unless these men be so strait-laced as not to admit the churches of Sweden and Denmark, and, indeed, all or most of the Lutherans, to be Reformed Churches. For Sweden, they retain both the thing and the name ; and the governors of their

¹ v. Lightfoot, “Philippians,” p. 229.

² Bishop Croft of Hereford in his famous pamphlet is very insistent on this point and on the importance of it. (v. “The Naked Truth,” printed in vol. vii of Somers’ Tracts.)

ANGLICAN CHRISTIANITY

churches are, and are called, bishops. And among the other Lutherans the thing is retained, though not the name. For instead of bishops, they are called superintendents, and instead of archbishops, general superintendents. And yet even here, too, these names differ more in sound than in sense.”¹

During the first and formative period of the Reformation, when the Anglican formularies were constructed, the chief importance was attached to faith, not to polity. The notion that the very being of a Church turned on the succession of bishops in an unbroken line from the Apostles was alien to the mind of the Reformers everywhere. It belonged to the same order of ideas as those which were distinctively “popish,” and as such hostile to the Gospel. On March 28, 1586, Hooker preached a notable sermon in the Temple, in which he considered and answered two questions, viz., Whether our fathers, infected

¹ *v.* Works, vol. iii, p. 386.

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

with popish errors and superstitions, might be saved? and, Whether their ignorance be a reasonable inducement to make us think they might? He gives the papists the benefit of the doubt, but the point which concerns us here is that he never so much as mentions the succession of the Roman ministry from the Apostles as having any bearing on the question of the possibility of salvation within the Roman Church. The root of the matter of Christianity could not, from Hooker's point of view, lie in the region of ecclesiastical organisation. There is a perceptible change of tone when we pass from the age of Hooker to that of Laud, but still the older emphasis on Faith survives; and the end of the seventeenth century witnessed a revival of anti-popish feeling which recreated the situation of the first generation of Reformers.

13. Few things are more curious in the history of religion than the rapid transformation of Anglicanism during the last two generations. The formularies of the Church of England

ANGLICAN CHRISTIANITY

remain the same, but the version of Christianity based on them is entirely different. If the tendencies which have prevailed during the last half-century continue to prevail during the next, will Anglicanism survive in any recognisable form? The process of reaction from the violence of the Reformers began, indeed, on the morrow of the Reformation, and was developed by the controversies of the age.

The retention of the old framework of English Religion was heavily challenged from two sides. Papists and Puritans joined hands against a system which denied the authority of the Pope, and pleaded that of the primitive Church. The limits within which that appeal is allowed by the formularies of the Reformed Church were easily ignored and forgotten. Elizabeth's Settlement of Religion, perforce attacked and defended on two fronts, changed imperceptibly its aspect. The Church of England emerged from the crucible of controversy a more distinctive and a less intelligible

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

institution. It benefited from the ardent nationalism of the Elizabethan epoch, and received the intensely insular stamp which marks it still. Medievalism was not insular : Puritanism was not insular : Anglicanism was the most insular factor of English life. The incoherence and isolation of the Church of England went hand in hand. For controversy forced into prominence those elements of the Anglican system (episcopate, liturgy, the appeal to antiquity) which seem to presuppose the Catholic theory, and gave an ambiguous colour to that Protestant character which the Anglican standards were undoubtedly designed to express. Protestantism in Europe declined with startling rapidity. "It has now," wrote Burnet in 1692, "for above a hundred years made a full stand, and in most places it has rather lost ground than gained any."

"It is very visible, that in this present age the Reformation is not only at a stand, but is going back and grows sensibly weaker and weaker. Some churches

ANGLICAN CHRISTIANITY

have been plucked up by the roots, and brought under a total desolation and dispersion ; and others have fallen under terrible oppressions and shakings.”

The Revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1685) was yet recent when Burnet wrote thus, but there is abundant evidence of the fact which he asserts. The Tridentine Counter-Reformation had destroyed one of the main sources of Protestant strength by removing the grosser scandals of medieval religion.

The stock-in-trade of the Protestant champions vanished with the ecclesiastical abuses. Indeed the balance of moral credit and intellectual power inclined to the older system, which had become, in the hands of the Jesuits, morally respectable, learned, and romantically interesting. Continental politics tended to the ruin of Protestantism. The Church of England became ever more imposing and more isolated. After its temporary eclipse during the interregnum it hardened its attitude both against Papists and against Puritans,

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

and developed a self-complacency which has never since been shaken off. A new turn was given to the Anglican compromise of the sixteenth century. Anglican controversialists worked out a rather fantastic theory built on rather dubious history. Episcopacy waxed in argument as it waned in government. Episcopalian theory reached high-water mark in exile. A great literature came into existence which elaborated this new conception of Anglicanism, and the failure of the policy of comprehension after the Revolution (1688) facilitated its general acceptance. Moreover English Protestantism had now in the newly-tolerated Dissent another and potentially a more effective instrument of self-expression.

The Anglo-Catholicism of Andrewes, Laud, and the later Carolines was always conditioned by an exalted doctrine of Monarchy, and by a profound hostility to the Roman Church. Their lofty episcopalianism remained theoretical, for the Catholic Church which they imagined had no existence in the world of

ANGLICAN CHRISTIANITY

fact and never had had any. The Revolution compelled the Non-jurors to attempt the translation of Anglo-Catholic theory into practice by building an independent Church on their principle of primitive Catholicism. The failure was speedy and complete. The Tractarians renewed the attempt after an interval of more than a century, and their apparent success has been remarkable. But hitherto (unlike the Non-jurors) they have worked within the National Church with the assistance of all the prestige and material advantage involved in Establishment. If these should be withdrawn, is it wholly improbable that they will repeat in their turn the failure of the Non-jurors? Besides, they have no longer the safeguards of a monarchical theory, and a hatred of the Papacy. There is a law of religious gravitation which operates in the history of Churches, and it may well be doubted whether, having broken with the State and repudiated the Reformation, a tiny Anglo-Catholic Church could long maintain

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

itself against the attraction of that older, greater, more coherent and imposing system in which its type of Christianity found less embarrassed expression. But neither Non-jurors nor Tractarians were in the main stream of Anglican religion. They are picturesque but fleeting by-products of the history. Apart from them, can we doubt that if the Anglican version of Protestant Christianity is to survive, it must become more articulate, courageous, and consistent? For the modern world is not growing more friendly to the privileged paradox of a self-contradicting Church, and has little fondness for working compromises and legal fictions, however ancient and ornamental. Anglicanism, as disclosed in its standards and in its history, national, primitive, above all Biblical, must make its count with modern conditions which have secularised national action, altered the whole manner of reading history, and revolutionised men's estimate and understanding of the Scriptures. Can the traditional appeal of English Church-

ANGLICAN CHRISTIANITY

men to the Bible, and to Christian antiquity, be so recast as still to justify a version of Christianity adequate to the spiritual needs of free and intelligent Englishmen? Can the "Via Media" of the Anglican formularies be maintained when that connection with the English State, which has hitherto made possible the co-existence of discordant interpretations within the Church, has been broken? These are questions which the future alone can answer. Meanwhile we must remember that every historic version of Christianity has title, worth, and vitality only as carrying to men a true expression of the Religion of Christ. Christianity is greater than its versions, and gives them all the life they have. If the Anglican version of Christianity is to survive the disappearance of the conditions under which it was fashioned and has been maintained, it must be because it is recognised by men's conscience and reason as in special measure vital and true. The principal difficulties of Anglicanism are,

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

when all is said, those which are common to every version of Christ's Religion. Is it only the partiality of an Anglican which persuades me that there are reasons why Anglicanism, better than most of its rivals, should succeed in meeting those difficulties, and satisfying the religious demand of thoughtful Englishmen? The Church of England, divided, illogical, incoherent, is perhaps better placed than most Churches for adventuring the indispensable experiment of harmonising the old truth of Christianity with the new knowledge of mankind. Its twofold appeal, to the Scriptures in essentials, to Christian antiquity in non-essentials, is still at bottom (to adopt Bishop Creighton's phrase) an appeal to "sound learning," that is to a frank acceptance of all the relevant knowledge which in our time has accumulated in such profusion and variety. The Scripture must remain supreme, not because its letter binds us by a Divine right, but because the Mind of Christ is disclosed in it as nowhere else.

ANGLICAN CHRISTIANITY

The supremacy of the Bible means for us the supremacy of the Divine Founder. "Back to Christ" is properly an Anglican formula. The appeal to Scripture as the Rule of Faith implies a recognition of those studies by which alone the true sense of Scripture can be determined. It offers, therefore, an escape from the tyranny of authoritative formulæ, creeds, and articles, embodying (as in some measure these must always embody) inadequate knowledge and obsolete forms of thought, and opens the door to that intellectual liberty which is both the life of science and the birthright of every self-respecting student. So with the appeal to antiquity. The Primitive Age must still have a special weight in determining our system of worship and polity, not because any perpetual obligation attaches to its precedents, but because it was a critically important part of that process of Divine Self-revelation which all history rightly studied is ordained to serve, and which continues ever. The appeal to history implies a philo-

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

sophy of history. It corrects whatever in Protestantism was merely local, secular, ethnical, individual, and binds the English Churchman to the largest conception of Christianity. The present, he knows, must include the past if indeed it is to satisfy the future. "*Nihil Christianum a me alienum puto*" might be the modern Anglican's profession. The Reformation lies in the line of true religious development; therefore he cannot possibly cut himself off from it; but the Reformation was not a complete expression of Christian truth even in its own age, nor could it claim any finality for its decisions. It was the starting-point of a fresh development, not an ultimate goal. Even the much-challenged national character of the English Church is not without value in an age which has witnessed the most amazing demonstrations of national vitality. Hooker's identification of Church and Nation was certainly something more than a description of the established system of his age. It expressed a profound

ANGLICAN CHRISTIANITY

truth which the Tudor policy assumed but could not really understand. That truth cannot safely be ignored in a modern democracy. That the nation, not less than the family, is a natural unit, and as such has its place in the scheme of that religion which exalts, hallows, and interprets every genuine expression of human nature, is a supposition which may serve to justify a lofty doctrine of the State as well as to inspire a policy of religious uniformity. When Hooker rejects as "a gross error" the notion that "God had ordained kings for no other end and purpose but only to fat up men like hogs, and to see that they have their mast," he accords with the deeper political thought of our age. National Christianity, whether or not it express itself in a single ecclesiastical organisation, implies a conviction that the Gospel extends its life-giving influence over the whole area of social life, and claims to rule in the cabinets of statesmen as well as in the homes of believers. Some words of the late Dr. Swete

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

may perhaps utter the true mind of the English Church :

“ The fetish of primitiveness is scarcely less to be deprecated than the fetish of medievalism ; neither the primitive nor the medieval life, if torn away from its original surroundings and transferred to a soil where the conditions are alien from those in which it grew up, is likely to thrive or to bear good fruit. Each age of the Church must live its own life, and deal with its own problems, following to a great extent the lead of circumstances, which offer in fact a Divine guidance for the shaping of its course.”¹

Assuredly, if the Church of England is to be true to its historic character, the version of Christianity which it will deliver in the future must be genuinely consistent with the principles which in the past have made it both distinctive and progressive, the home of large theological liberty, of an ordered devotion, and of a sternly practical morality.

¹ v. *The Early History of the Church and the Ministry*, Preface, p. xvii.

ANGLICAN CHRISTIANITY

To sum up. Two interpretations of Anglican Christianity are before the world, and pressing for acceptance. The one represents the Reformation as a lamentable irrelevance, injected disastrously into our ecclesiastical system three and a half centuries ago, and claims that Anglicanism is essentially a version of the older type of Catholic Christianity, having its true affinity with the unreformed churches. The other accepts the Reformation as a critical phase in the development of Christ's Religion, and regards Anglicanism as properly continuous therefrom, a true expression in the twentieth century of the spiritual principles which emerged in the sixteenth, a version therefore of the Protestant Religion having its true affinity with the Reformed Churches. I have made it sufficiently clear that the latter interpretation appears to me to be required by the Anglican formularies, and to be alone congruous with the history of the Church of England. I think also that only as a version of the Protestant Religion has Anglicanism any *raison d'être*,

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

or any spiritual future. Some words of Archbishop Tait, written to his friend the Dean of Durham in 1877, are certainly not less relevant to the situation of the Church of England in 1919 :

“ I am sometimes dispirited by thinking how the energies of the Bishops and Clergy, which might by God’s blessing produce such great results, are wasted by being diverted to paltry and miserable questions which ought to have been considered as settled when our Lord rebuked the Pharisees and St. Paul the Judaizers. What might not the Church of England do if, discarding absurd pretensions and disputes about anise and cummin, its clergy would place themselves at the head of the Christian progress of the age.” ¹

¹ “ Memorials of Dean Lake,” p. 232.

THE DUTY OF A NATIONAL
CHURCH

BY H. L. GOUDGE, D.D.

Canon of Ely, Principal of Ely Theological College

SYNOPSIS

THE DUTY OF A NATIONAL CHURCH

I. VARIOUS SENSES IN WHICH THE TERM "NATIONAL CHURCH" IS EMPLOYED.

The question before us inevitable. Whatever form of Christianity we accept, a national Church must be faithful to the mission of the universal Church.

How far is adaptation justifiable ?

II. THE DIVINE CALLING OF THE CHURCH THE FIRST CONSIDERATION.

Two views of the relation of the ideal to practice.

(a) That of the theologian. (b) That of the historian.
The synthesis and its character.

III. THE MEANING AND PURPOSE OF THE CHURCH.

The Gospel of the kingdom to be proclaimed by the Church's life.

The Gospel the touchstone of character.

The Church has a continuous life throughout the history recorded in the Bible.

Israel God's witness to the world, and its failure.

The Church reconstituted by the Christ.

The kingdom has come in part, but is still to be expected.

IV. THE DUTY OF A NATIONAL CHURCH.

The vanity of national character partly divinely ordered, but partly the result of sin.

Characteristics of the Englishman.

(a) He is practical rather than intellectual.

(b) His national feeling is strong.

(c) He is markedly independent.

(d) He values religion mainly as an aid to morality.

Truth must for him be embodied in facts.

Thus the Church must :—

(a) Be seen as a body distinct from the world.

(b) Attain a substantial unity of life and witness.

(c) Bear witness to the true character of corporate life under the Divine rule.

V. THE CHURCH, LIKE THE CHRIST, MUST BE THE MESSAGE AS WELL AS THE MESSENGER.

The first step the attainment of freedom to order the Church's corporate life.

THE DUTY OF A NATIONAL CHURCH

It is a disadvantage not to have heard the earlier lectures of the course. The subjects of these lectures are so closely connected that it is difficult to deal with one alone. If I say what you have already heard, I shall say it independently ; and if I seem to controvert what you have already heard, I shall controvert it unconsciously. Unhappily we do not all think alike about the Church of God ; and, even when we think alike, we may employ varying language. Let me ask you to put aside, as far as you may, all question of my agreement or disagreement with others, and to consider only how far what I say is in accordance with truth.

I

A few words may be useful as to the title of this lecture. The expression "a national Church" is one which is used with widely

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

different meanings. It may mean, firstly, a Church which claims to embrace all the members of a nation. It may mean, secondly, what is called an established Church, a Church which is more or less closely allied with the State. It may mean, thirdly, a Church which, whether or no it be established, is in some degree separated from the Churches of other lands, and is thus unavoidably disposed to reflect the character and temper of a particular nation. It may mean, fourthly, a Church which, like the Church of France, though obviously part of a much larger whole, has nevertheless its home in a particular country, and is organised in recognition of the fact. Obviously these various meanings are not all mutually exclusive, but we must bear them all in mind, if we would avoid confusion of thought.

Now I desire to-night to avoid all needless controversy. I shall therefore give the term "a national Church" a wide extension, and mean by it simply an organised body of Christian people belonging to one of the nations of the

DUTY OF A NATIONAL CHURCH

world. Such a body may or may not claim to embrace all the members of the nation ; it may or may not be “established” ; it may or may not be in communion with other bodies of Christians either within the nation or beyond its borders. Differences such as these may affect the problem before us, but for the most part do not fundamentally alter it. The question before us is one which we cannot avoid, whether we are Romans, or Anglicans, or Wesleyans, or what you will. The Church universal, of which we all claim to be members, has a work to do for the world. What is this work, and how far in doing it do we need to remember the special characteristics of the nation to which we belong ? It is quite arguable that no conscious adaptation is necessary. The Gospel and the Church are as necessary to one nation as to another ; we need them both simply because we are men. Plainly a national Church must remain faithful to the mission of the Church universal, and not, in seeking to adapt, narrow or alter the scope of its work ;

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

the more isolated such a Church is, the greater will this danger be. But I think we shall most of us agree that too great rigidity is as real a danger as too great readiness to adapt, though not a danger equally serious. In any case, the divine mission of the Church must be the primary consideration. No adaptation can be right which is really inconsistent with our calling. Just in so far as we "please men" instead of God, we cease to be "the servants of Christ." Liberality is good, but we may only be liberal with that which is our own.

II

You see then that we cannot usefully attack our problem without first considering the divine calling of the Church, and the work which it is intended to do. The Church national stands to the nation much as the Church universal stands to the world. We must have the ideal clearly before us, though it may not be possible immediately to realise it. For let us notice that, though a human ideal may

DUTY OF A NATIONAL CHURCH

be no more than a beautiful dream, a divine ideal is always something which by the divine grace may and ought to be realised. We may contrast it with what is possible at the moment, but not, without refusal of the faith God asks of us, with what is possible in the long run. May I dwell for a few minutes upon this point ? The theologian on the one hand, and the historian on the other—may we not add the embryo theologian and the embryo historian in the breast of each one of us ?—tend to draw us in opposite directions.

The theologian most rightly “hitches his wagon to a star” ; but not so rightly he sometimes allows his grasp of ideas to weaken his grasp of facts. He looks at the Church, as he thinks that it exists in the divine purpose, and at the path which it is called to follow ; he then calls upon us without further ado to reproduce this “pattern shewn him in the mount.” He forgets that the Church as it ought to be is one thing, and the Church as it is is another ; he also forgets that the path we

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

must follow must always begin at the place where we actually find ourselves. There is a story of an Irishman who, being asked the way to Roscommon, replied "If I wanted to go to Roscommon, I shouldn't be starting from here." That is the perennial difficulty.

A theologian of one type will speak to us somewhat as follows. "The Church of God is a Catholic institution, not a national one. You talk of the Church of England? What is it? The Church of England is simply two provinces of the Church Catholic which have become separated from the rest. That separation is most regrettable, and the sooner we get rid of it the better. Meanwhile we should live and act as if it did not exist. If we are Catholics, let us be Catholics indeed. Go by the universal standards; all that contravene them are *ipso facto* null and void." Now that may be "magnificent," but I am afraid that it is "not war." We are both what we are and where we are. The *Ecclesia Anglicana*, with its special relation to the English people,

DUTY OF A NATIONAL CHURCH

is a fact. We of the Province of Canterbury are in the closest possible relations with our brethren of the Province of York, and with the daughter Churches of the Anglican communion. With our brethren of the Province of Paris, or of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, we have indeed deep spiritual relations as fellow-members of the Body of Christ, but on the external side of our religious life we are widely sundered from them. All this is in part due to causes far older than the sixteenth century. Whether or not it ought to be so, the *Ecclesia Anglicana* is in fact a unity which must be distinguished from the rest of Christendom, and we, who are its ministers, have taken upon ourselves distinct and solemn obligations towards it as such. We must start for Roscommon from the place where in fact we are.

A theologian of a different type will be impressed by different considerations. "The Church," he will say, "is the whole body of Christian people scattered throughout the world. The Church of a Christian nation is the nation

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

itself, the clergy being but a tiny fraction, which too often usurps the rights of the whole. No doubt there are members of the nation who are opposed to the Church regarded as an institution, and would perhaps repudiate the Christian name. But for practical purposes we need not consider them. The law practically identifies the citizen and the Churchman ; let us do the same. Trust the religious instincts of the people ; they are much sounder than those of the clerical caste. Let the whole body guide Church policy, as it guides national policy." Now that again may be " magnificent " ; but it is " not war," since it ignores the actual situation to which the past has brought us. It is not merely that the Roman and Nonconformist bodies render such a course impossible ; to suggest it is to ignore the position of the majority of the English people. Though there is a great deal of diffused as contrasted with organised Christianity among them, they cannot seriously be regarded as working members of the Church, nor do they even wish to be so

DUTY OF A NATIONAL CHURCH

regarded. If they are soldiers, they may register themselves as C. of E. ; but they regard all organised Churches as bodies distinct from themselves, with whom they are in imperfect sympathy, and with whose concerns they would not think of meddling. If the law holds otherwise, "the law," as Mr. Bumble so poignantly complained, "is a ass." We may, or may not, wish to go to the State-Churchman's Roscommon, but at any rate we must start from the place where in fact we are.

Now it is from such "speaking into the air" as this that it is the work of the historian to deliver us, and a very rigorous teacher he often proves to be. But he too is exposed to a danger peculiarly his own. The historian as such is not concerned with ideals, but with facts ; and he sometimes forgets that the facts might be and ought to be other than they are. Just as the Victorian man of science often rejected human freedom as inconsistent with the scientific view of the world, so the historian is prone to ignore human freedom and its

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

consequences in relating the facts of history. The facts as he sees them seem the inevitable consequences of causes which it is his business to trace, and to condemn them appears to him unmeaning. He will not, if he is a Christian, deny the Divine purpose in history, but he will seek rather to discern that purpose through the facts than to criticise the facts in view of a purpose otherwise revealed. The difficulty about the way to Roscommon does not trouble him, because there is no particular Roscommon to which he wishes to go. God is immanent in history ; the path by which we travel is divinely chosen ; as to its goal we must wait and see, and meanwhile in a humble spirit try to leave the world a little better than we found it.

The common problem, yours, mine, every one's
Is—not to fancy what were fair in life
Provided it could be—but, finding first
What may be, then find how to make it fair
Up to our means ; a very different thing !
No abstract intellectual plan of life
Quite irrespective of life's plainest laws,
But one, a man, who is man and nothing more,
May lead within a world which (by your leave)
Is Rome or London, not Fool's-Paradise.

DUTY OF A NATIONAL CHURCH

Quite so. But then unfortunately two questions suggest themselves. The first is, How do you "find what may be"? The second is, When you have found it, how apart from an ideal do you propose to "make it fair up to our means"? Directly you propose to make a thing fair, you are judging the product of history by an ideal which you have derived from some other source. The theologian has you at his mercy. For all your talk about the facts of history you are an idealist as he is. The difference between you is that his ideal is God-given, and therefore by the divine grace attainable, while yours, though immeasurably poorer and less inspiring, is a dream of your own, probably not attainable at all.

You see then my point. We need a synthesis of the view of the theologian with that of the historian. We must begin with an ideal, derived indeed in part from history, but in part also from that "word of prophecy," by which, as by the choric songs of a Greek tragedy, the fulfilment of God's purpose in the

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

world has been foreshadowed and accompanied. We must steer our course by the ideal ; we must judge all that we do by its tendency to realise the ideal. But at the same time we must remember where we are, and not suppose that we can do nothing aright until we have created the exact conditions which we should desire. Is not the lesson of the past just this ? God has revealed to us the broad outlines of His purpose, and calls us to co-operate with Him ; were the purpose altogether unknown, co-operation would be impossible. He has also revealed the main features of the road by which we should travel. But when we wander from the right way, God does not leave us alone until we again discover it. He is ever close to us even in the way we have preferred to His, and holds up the ideal before us still. We must seek to reach it by the road which is now the shortest and the best, though it is not the road by which we should have travelled. We need not and should not attempt to go back to the point where first we diverged from

DUTY OF A NATIONAL CHURCH

the King's Highway ; that would be to sacrifice the fruit of the efforts which we, and still more He, has made since the divergence took place. " God fulfils Himself in many ways," and His methods are more flexible than we sometimes suppose.

III

What then do we mean by the Church, and what is God's purpose for it? You will, I hope, forgive me, if I seem to speak in a way unduly dogmatic. I must state convictions which may not be altogether your own, and state them, since the time at our disposal is short, without giving for them all the grounds which I should like to give. But, though I may say some things which may be unfamiliar, I hope that I shall say nothing which is really disputable by those who have read their Bibles. Next to God Himself the Church is the great subject of Scripture teaching ; it ought not to be beyond us to discover what it is meant to be.

What then, we again ask, do we mean by the

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

Church? Let us think of it in its relation to the Kingdom of God. All our troubles arise from the fact that the rule of God is not at present fully operative. The very character of God's purpose demands that the will of man should be free, and man has misused and perpetually misuses his freedom. The rule of God has been rejected; of ourselves we neither desire it nor know how to obtain it. We have become subject to manifold tyrannies, of our fellow-men without and of our own lusts within, and we cannot of ourselves break them. If God is to be our Ruler—and nothing else will serve—He must Himself bestow the infinite blessing of His rule upon us, while we for our part must respond to what He does for us, and freely accept His rule. Now the eternal gospel is “the Gospel of the Kingdom,” the good news that God is ready to bestow His rule upon us, in part now, and in its fullness hereafter. It is here that we see the meaning and purpose of the Church. The Church, or people of God, is the body which God has chosen out

DUTY OF A NATIONAL CHURCH

of the world to be the present sphere of His rule, to exhibit the unspeakable blessing which it brings, to reveal God, and attract men to Him. "Ye," says St. Peter, "are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a consecrated nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of Him, who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light." In the life which the Church is leading the world is to see a life which in purity, in power, in prosperity, and in joy, stands in the strongest contrast to its own, and so be led to desire the divine rule for itself. No doubt the Church has a message to proclaim to the world in word as well as in deed. But the proclamation in life is primary, while the proclamation in word is secondary, and rests largely upon the proclamation in life. The blessings which the Gospel of the Kingdom offers both here and hereafter are so amazing as to be quite incredible, unless the earnest of them is actually offered to view. The Kingdom of God must be seen to be believed, and

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

the world cannot be expected to make the necessary sacrifices to attain it, unless the facts of the Church's life show it to be attainable. Thus the grace and the truth which the Church is empowered to offer are in the closest connection one with another. The truth calls attention to the grace, and makes clear the means to its attainment; but the grace seen in the life which the Church is living proves that the message delivered is truth indeed, and so leads to its acceptance. It is not indeed supposed that the world as a whole will accept the conditions of the divine rule; the distinction between the Church and the world will endure to the end. But this is not to say that the Church will fail in its mission. Though in one aspect its mission is to "gather," in another it is to divide. The gospel preached by life and word is the touchstone of human character; the world judges itself by the response which it makes to it. But this is just what God intends. When evil and good have both grown together until the harvest, the

DUTY OF A NATIONAL CHURCH

divine judgment will supervene to ratify the judgment which men have already passed upon themselves. All forces which have opposed themselves to the divine rule will be done away, and the Kingdom of God will be given to us in its final perfection.

Let us see how all this is illustrated by the pages of history. The Church, according to the writers of the New Testament, was not first founded by our Lord. It began long before in Israel, and possesses a continuous life. There was a crisis in its life when the Messiah of the Church came, as there had been a crisis when it was carried captive to Babylon ; but the principles of its life and witness remain ever the same.

We begin then with the calling of Israel. I need not say how its calling illustrates the fact that the establishment of the rule of God must be the act of God. It was not the people of Israel who chose Yahweh, but Yahweh who chose them, Yahweh who with a mighty hand and a stretched out arm delivered them

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

from the Egyptian bondage, and bestowed Himself upon them as their King. But the main point to be noticed is that God's purpose was to raise up a witness to Himself. "As the girdle cleaveth to the loins of a man, so have I caused to cleave unto me the whole house of Israel, and the whole house of Judah, saith the Lord; that they might be unto me for a people, and for a name, and for a praise, and for a glory." How was this to be? By the life which Israel led, and the universal prosperity which was seen to follow it. In the ancient world the reputation of the tribal or national god was bound up with the prosperity of his people. If *e.g.* one tribe was defeated by another in war, the natural conclusion was that the god of the one was superior to the god of the other; prophets and psalmists frequently remind Yahweh of the fact. It was of this fact that God availed Himself in the working out of His purpose, though in such a way that the witness of His people's life should not be to His power alone. He did not only redeem

DUTY OF A NATIONAL CHURCH

His people out of Egypt ; having redeemed them, He gave them His law, and claimed their obedience to it. His blessing, His protection, unlike those of the gods of the heathen, were dependent upon obedience to His moral claims. It was better even that the power of Yahweh should be for the moment discredited, than that He should be thought to care as little for righteousness as Chemosh or Milcom. But so long as His word was obeyed, His blessing was given ; Israel was a city set upon a hill, a light to lighten the Gentiles by the revelation of its God through the glory of its life.

Thus God's revelation lies primarily in facts ; the gospel of the kingdom is preached by the existence of the kingdom, though the prophetic word must call attention to it when it is there. It was but when the realisation of the kingdom in Israel was made impossible by Israel's rejection of the divine law, that the kingdom came to be expected in the future rather than found in the present. If it seems strange to us that the Church of God should at first be

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

found in a particular nation, and not as now in an international society, the explanation lies surely in the fact that the individual had not yet reached his true position. Apart from a few seers and prophets, religion and morality were at first national rather than individual matters, and witness for God could be borne to the world by the nation alone. But this was only the first stage, and as within the community the individual gradually came into his own, we can see how the way was prepared for the Catholic Church of Christ. In the first place, it became clear that "they are not all Israel which are of Israel." Just because God's choice of His people was for a purpose of His own, they could not count upon the continuance of His favour if they did not answer to that purpose. Though He did not at first go outside Israel for His witnesses, Israel had to be purged by great acts of judgment; again and again it was but "the remnant" which was saved. In the second place, as the prophets came to look for the kingdom in the future

DUTY OF A NATIONAL CHURCH

rather than to find it in the present, the Gentiles came slowly to find a place, however lowly, in the pictures which the prophets drew. Slowly it was seen that, if it was Yahweh's will to reveal His glory through His people, it was not that the Gentiles might admire from afar, but that they might seek and find a place within the sphere of His rule. Judgment would not be for the Gentiles alone, nor mercy for Israel alone. So it was that, though the Church till the coming of the Lord remained the nation of Israel, the time came when Gentile proselytes were not only admitted, but eagerly sought; the Church became missionary not only in life but in word also.

Now it was at this point that our Lord appeared to redeem and reconstitute the Church, and to throw its gates wide open to the world. His Gospel, like the gospel of the prophets, was the gospel of the kingdom, and He proclaimed that the kingdom was already at hand. His appeal like theirs was at first to the nation as a whole. He sought, as the Baptist had done

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

in preparing His way, to recall the people of God to their true vocation, that their light might shine before men, and glorify their Father in heaven ; and that, when the kingdom came in power, they might not be excluded from it. If Israel was “not gathered,” it was no fault of the Lord. But when the people of God, being called to the kingdom, refused to repent and make the sacrifices which it demanded, the Lord prepared to reconstitute the Church. He could not build upon the sand ; He needed to dig down through the *débris* of an Israel which was no longer Israel till He found the rock, and rebuild the Church upon it. In Himself the Christ of God, the glory and the powers of the kingdom of God were already revealed. He, and He alone, exhibited a perfect surrender to the divine rule, and so enjoyed the blessedness which follows it. Indeed we might almost say that for a time the Lord and the kingdom were identified. He at any rate was the Door of the Sheep ; and membership in the Church, the earthly sphere of

DUTY OF A NATIONAL CHURCH

the kingdom of God, depended upon faith in Himself as the Christ—the bringer, the head, the corner-stone of the kingdom. Thus it was only when the confession of St. Peter showed that the rock had at last been struck that the Lord spoke of Himself as able to build the Church at all. But the Cross and the Resurrection necessarily came first. It was not enough to find the true sheep; the Good Shepherd had to lay down His life for them; as in Egypt long ago, the people who had been chosen needed to be redeemed before the kingdom could be given to them. The kingdom of God is a spiritual kingdom; no one can enter it unless he is born of the Spirit; and the power to bestow the Spirit must by the Christ of God be won by sacrifice and death. It is only the corn of wheat that dies that brings forth fruit; only the stricken rock from which the water flows. So the Christ died, rose, ascended, Himself entered upon the kingdom in its heavenly perfection, and bestowed the Spirit, which made the Church, in so far as

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

the Church would have it so, the earthly sphere of the divine rule, and of the blessedness which it brings. That is where we stand to-day. God has “delivered us out of the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love.” No doubt there is much still to be expected, and longingly desired. The Spirit is but “the earnest” of all for which we look. Though in our deepest life we reign with the Christ, we still must “wait for” the redemption of the body, and of that outward scene of which the body is a part. Though the whole creation must be brought within the kingdom, it is not yet within it. But the Church is “glorified” by the Spirit already, and through it the divine glory can shine out to the world. The kingdom is present, though in its full glory it is still to come ; and the Church by life and word must witness to it, and to Him, by faith in whom we must claim our share in it.

DUTY OF A NATIONAL CHURCH

IV

We see then what the Church of God is ever intended to be. The duty of a national Church immediately follows from it. Its duty is to be to the nation just what the Church as a whole is to be to the world. It is called to realise in every aspect of its life the rule of God, and the blessedness which that rule bestows ; and then by life and word to attract to God all within that nation who will yield to His attraction, and bring them to share the blessings of His rule. Adaptation will indeed be necessary. Englishmen, to take but one example, have their own God-given characteristics, as well as their own weaknesses and sins ; and the national Church must be English to the English, that it may by all means save the English. But the first duty of a national Church is not to adapt, but to be faithful to the Church's universal mission ; adaptation will be largely unconscious, and will come by

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

the way. Perhaps the best course for us will be to consider firstly the principles of adaptation ; and then, with our own country in our minds, to look at the duty of the Church in view of them.

Why, let us ask, does one nation differ from another ? That they differ greatly is obvious : Easterns differ from Westerns, Englishmen from Italians, even Englishmen from Scotsmen. The differences are broadly of two kinds. Partly they are, we believe, divinely intended, the varying characteristics of nations, like those of individuals, leading to the enrichment both of the Church and of the world. Partly they are due to sin, and the varying forms which it takes in one people and in another. Englishmen, for example, are more affected by pride than Frenchmen, and Frenchmen more affected by vainglory than Englishmen. It is in view of both these forms of difference that adaptation is necessary. The Church has to claim and to consecrate all that is good in each nation, to accept its unavoidable limitations as the

DUTY OF A NATIONAL CHURCH

will of God, and to wage ceaseless war against what is definitely evil. We must remember all this, whether we are evangelising those outside the Church, or teaching and training those who are within.

Let us consider that great and most individual people to which we ourselves belong ; and let us consider it, not in the spirit of " the superior person," but with the fullest remembrance that its characteristics are our own. Though we must look at the Englishman in the light of God, far from us be either complaint or ridicule ! Love, we know, is the basis of understanding. Like St. Paul, we should be ready to wish that we were anathema from Christ for our kinsmen according to the flesh. What then is the Englishman ? I can but touch incidentally upon points here and there.

In the first place, the Englishman is a Western of the Westerns. Thought, contemplation, and worship belong especially to the East ; experiment and practical activity to the West. The Englishman as a rule has small love for

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

ideas ; he does not think deeply or carefully about abstract truth ; his interest lies in facts and in what he can make of them. Very energetic he can be when he has an end to gain, very sensible and practical, so far as it is possible to be so without much thinking. Moreover at his best he has a high sense of duty, and he does his duty simply and bravely without much consideration of why he does it.

In the second place, the Englishman is intensely national—if you will, intensely insular. The welfare of the nation means much to him, and he looks little beyond it. Seldom is he “a good European.” If he cares for the national Church, it is as a national institution that he cares for it. In religion, as in other things, he likes to go his own way and “muddle through.” He finds it hard to suppose that what he and his fathers have received can have anything seriously wrong with it. He will grumble at what he has ; grumbling is his birthright ; but he is very unwilling to have it

DUTY OF A NATIONAL CHURCH

corrected by ideas drawn from beyond the seas.

In the third place, the Englishman is extremely independent. He does not drive and he refuses to be driven. Religion and morality appear to him as personal rather than corporate concerns, and he dislikes the claim of the Church to exercise authority over them. He cares for freedom of speech and action more than he cares for the correspondence of either with exact truth. He is very tolerant of all that does not seriously outrage his conscience, and expects from others the same tolerance that he is ready to grant.

In the fourth place, though with him religion and morality are closely allied, morality is the predominant partner. Though the Englishman is scarcely ever religious without being moral, he is frequently of high moral character without being consciously religious. Indeed he generally values religion mainly as an aid to morality, and not from conscious love to God or the desire for eternal life. Plainly it

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

will not be easy to distinguish the good from the evil in all this, and consecrate the one while we attack the other.

But how will the Church's appeal best be made? We have seen that it arises both from the witness of life and from the witness of word. There is no doubt as to the right approach to the Englishman. To those who desire to illuminate him by a verbal exposition of the truth he is the most exasperating of men. The more pains we take with our exposition, the more he thinks that it is not true. He will not follow an elaborate argument; indeed he profoundly mistrusts it. He will neither accept truth on the Church's authority, nor justify his rejection of authority by investigation for himself. He deals with religion as he deals with politics and economics. His attention fastens upon one or two obvious facts which happen to have come his way, and upon them he founds the theory upon which he justifies the line he takes. How far in all the Englishman is to be blamed for

DUTY OF A NATIONAL CHURCH

all this it is hard to say. It is certain that congenitally he lacks both the depth of the Scot and the logic of the Frenchman, and certain also that he is intellectually lazy. But what the Church should do is to make use of his strong points, of his respect for facts, his practical outlook, his candour, his profound respect for what is noble in character and conduct. There is no one to whom the divine method, as we have seen it in history, is more appropriate. It is not "truth embodied in a tale" but truth embodied in a fact which enters most easily at his lowly door, and the gospel of the kingdom must reach him primarily in this way. The Church must first embody the truth in its own life; then it will arrest the Englishman's attention, and he will listen gladly to the explanation we give him of what he sees.

How then is this to be done? The first thing necessary is this. The Church within the nation must be, and must be seen to be, distinct from the nation itself. It is true that

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

this will be in some degree an offence to the Englishman's national feeling. The thought of the Church as an international society does not naturally appeal to him; the Old Testament method, which God has for ever laid aside, is much more to his mind. Like the German he likes to think that he belongs to a chosen people, and that England rather than the Catholic Church is the bearer of God's mission to the world. But unless the Church is distinct from the nation, it cannot bear that practical witness to the kingdom of God which the Englishman so imperatively needs. Contrast, as we have seen, belongs to the essence of the divine plan. While the Church was conterminous with Israel, its separateness from the rest of the world was secured in every possible way. So it was also when the Church became Catholic. The claim for faith in Jesus as the Christ of God, the moral obligations laid upon Christians, the disciplined common life of the Church, made membership in it a costly thing, and kept the Church

DUTY OF A NATIONAL CHURCH

distinct from the heathen around it. Had it not been so, the witness borne by the Church's life, and the blessing which rested upon it, that witness which did far more to draw the best men of all nations to it than the appeals of its divines and philosophers, could never have been borne at all. When, after Constantine, mass movements to the Church began, and the Church became confused with the world, the corporate witness of the Church became as feeble as it has ever since been. Thus the first duty of a national Church is to exercise such a discipline over its members as shall preserve its standards, and with them the presence of the Spirit, and the blessing of God. What the exact obligations of membership should be, this is not the place to inquire ; but one remark may be made. Though obligations of faith, of conduct, and of worship must all have their place, with Englishmen the stress should be laid primarily upon conduct, and that for two reasons. In the first place, their conscience will be outraged if this

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

is not done ; and a discipline which the conscience does not support does harm rather than good. In the second place, the faith of an Englishman and his conduct are quite peculiarly one, and it is far easier to judge of the latter than of the former. The expression of his faith is very difficult to him, since he reflects upon it, and speaks of it so little ; the real test is what he will do. Of course the standard of conduct upon which the Church insists must be the Christian standard, and not the current standard of the world ; covetousness and pride, when they take overt forms, must as really exclude from the Church as drunkenness or lust. But if this be remembered, moral discipline will carry us far. It will not separate the tares from the wheat ; that is not its object ; but it will at any rate enable the wheat-field to be distinguished at sight from the jungle.

The second duty of a national Church is to attain a substantial unity of life and witness. Divisions among Christians do not nullify the witness of the Church, as identification with

DUTY OF A NATIONAL CHURCH

the nation nullifies it ; but they most grievously impair it, and it is divisions among the Christians of one nation rather than divisions between Christians of different nations that are practically most disastrous. The theories we may hold make no difference to the fact. We may hold that in England the Roman Church or the Anglican Church is the only true representative of the Church Catholic ; but neither the one nor the other is so regarded by the nation at large. By those who are without definite convictions "the Churches" in the sense of all religious bodies taken together are regarded as in some confused way standing for "religion" ; the real witness for God in England is the life and word of all these bodies together. When they are practically agreed as to their witness, that witness is effective ; when they are not, they nullify one another. Why is it so generally supposed that the Christian standard of conduct is clear and definite, and the Christian standard of belief and worship very much the reverse ? Why does the statement

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

that a man is a good Christian commonly have reference to conduct only? It is not that the standard of conduct is so much clearer than that of faith or worship; Christian ethics and worship are alike dependent upon Christian faith. The reason is that the various Christian bodies are largely in agreement as to their moral witness, but not as to their witness to faith and devotion; while, in the case of faith, they give the impression to the world that they are far more divided than is actually the case. There is surely no duty more urgent than to recover within the borders of our country a unity which will make possible a far fuller corporate witness. Important as reunion with the great Churches of the West and the East undoubtedly is, it is distinctly of less importance for the work of the Church in this land.

The third duty—it is dependent upon the accomplishment of the other two—is the development within the Church of a corporate witness not merely to the true life of the individual under the rule of God, but to the

DUTY OF A NATIONAL CHURCH

true life of the community also. The Church must be an association not just of individuals living a supernatural life, but an association for a corporate holiness which draws corporate well-being after it. That this was the case with Israel of old we have already seen ; it was so equally, as far as circumstances allowed, in the primitive Church of Christ. Right relations between Christian masters and Christian slaves, the care of the sick and of the old, the lifting of every faithful member of the Church above the level of want, were part of the Church's witness to the world. So it ought to be to-day. I need not remind you how greatly the Church is blamed for failing to bear witness to the social principles of the gospel. We ought, it is urged, to have a message to deliver as to international relations, as to the duty of the State to its members, as to the employment and remuneration of labour, just as really as we have a message to deliver as to individual and family life. Most true ; but how is it to be delivered ? Primarily by

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

embodying the social principles of the Gospel in the life of the Church itself. When we have embodied them, we can with effect proclaim and expound them, but not before. The true way of explaining how nations might be mutually helpful instead of mutually hostile is by exhibiting the marvellous mutual helpfulness of national Churches. The true way of explaining the duty of the State to the individual is by the relations which are seen to exist between the Church and its individual members. The true way of explaining how business can be conducted upon Christian principles is by Christian employers and workmen so conducting it. The practical Englishman will reckon little of any other explanation. That is one reason why the reunion of the different Christian bodies is so urgent. Our so-called religious divisions rest largely upon class divisions; masters belong to one body and workmen to another. We want all Christians to be members of one body, that we may have businesses conducted by masters and workmen

DUTY OF A NATIONAL CHURCH

subject to a common religious discipline. We have them in the mission-field ; why not at home ? It is widely believed that to apply Christian principles to business is to court disaster. So it may be, if we only apply them one by one ; the new patch takes from the old garment, and the rent is made worse. The rule of God must be accepted as a whole, and it is in the Church alone that it is offered to us. Of course, Christians engaged in business must face their problems in the light of God, and all Christians in their capacity as citizens must seek to lift all parts of the national life as high as they may. But while the world refuses faith, the Church can have no very definite advice to give to it as to the management of its affairs ; it is not its business to be “ a judge and a divider ” to those who do not accept the full message which it brings. No, it is for the Church to embody the rule of God firstly in its own corporate life ; then only is it likely to bear an effective witness. If to-day our only effective witness to the

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

kingdom lies in the domain of the individual life, the reason is not far to seek. It is there only that we accept God's rule ourselves. But such a limitation is as unnecessary as it is practically disastrous. The gracious rule of God is offered to us for every department of our life, and, unless we accept it everywhere, no full witness can be borne.

V

It is time to bring this lecture to a close. I have touched but a few aspects of a vast subject, and these, I fear, but with an unpractised hand. If little has been said about the duty of the Church to preach the Gospel in word, that is not because it has been forgotten. It is because to-day our corporate failure lies far more in living the gospel than in preaching it. Christ our Lord preached the gospel of the kingdom not in word only, but in act also. He embodied in Himself the rule of God, manifesting its glory to all who had eyes to see ; and that not

DUTY OF A NATIONAL CHURCH

only in His earthly life, but by the Cross and the Resurrection that followed it. He was not only the Messenger, but the Word of God ; not only the Sower, but the seed that died to bring forth much fruit. So it must be with ourselves. And if you are disposed to say that all this is quite unpractical, and that if we wanted to go to Roscommon we shouldn't be starting from here, my answer is this. It is indeed deeply to be regretted that we must start from the place where we stand to-day ; but, if the purpose of God is clear and unalterable, there must be a way to its attainment from any point where we may happen to be. The right path may now be difficult to find, but a path there must be. It is at any rate certain that God means the Church to be distinct from the world ; certain that He means its members to form one body ; certain that, so far as this is possible before the redemption of the body and the outward scene, He means us to realise His kingdom in every part of our life. Is not the first step absolutely clear ?

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

We of the Church of England must at any sacrifice obtain liberty to order our own corporate life under the divine rule. While the relation of the Church to the State is what it is to-day, there will be no proper discipline, and no healthy reunion with other Christians, and without these two things the realisation of God's kingdom in the Church is but a dream.

SOME CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

BY THE REV. A. C. HEADLAM, D.D.,

*Regius Professor of Divinity in the University of Oxford and
Canon of Christ Church; formerly Principal and Professor
of Dogmatic Theology in King's College, London*

SYNOPSIS

THE Church of England can only be known by its history.

The Anglo-Saxon Church—The two sources from which it originated—Its severance from Rome, but its strong national character. The Mediæval Church—Roman and Anti-Roman policy. The Reformation—a complex movement. Different tendencies of thought—Protestantism—Anglicanism—Latitudinarianism—The national tradition.

Characteristics of the Church of England :—

a. Continuity.

b. A National Church.

c. Freedom.

d. Learning—its connection with Universities.

Value of continuity. It implies an organic growth, a share in the whole tradition and life of the Church—a Church not narrowed by being confined to one school. “The Church of England is not an illogical compromise, but represents Christianity in an atmosphere of freedom.” It has received a large share of the full Christian tradition.

SOME CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

SOME years ago I was requested to write an article on the Church of England for an American encyclopædia. When I began to think about it, it occurred to me how difficult a task it was to explain the Church of England to an outsider. If, for example, my duty had been to describe a Calvinistic Church I should have begun by discussing the theology of Calvin, and I should have thus given a not inadequate idea of the formal principles of that Church. But the Church of England is not built on the theology of any theologian. It might be supposed that I should refer to the formulas of the Church. A study, for example, of the decrees of the Council of Trent and of the Vatican Council would give a fairly correct idea of the teaching of the Church of Rome.

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

But how very inadequate a conception of what the Church of England is would be gained from the Thirty-nine Articles. Many people, if confronted with this task, would be inclined to outline the teaching of that school which is called Anglican. But there is a large section of the Church of England which would repudiate that teaching. Anglicanism did not create the Church of England but was created by it. When, in fact, we look at the Church of England we find that there is great variety of thought in it, and that it takes long to understand it in all its aspects. I concluded, therefore, that the Church of England could not be described except through its history. How strong is the influence of the past among us will be apparent in any direction in which we turn. It is not possible to understand the difference between a rector and a vicar without an appreciation of the ecclesiastical conditions of the Middle Ages, and there is much ecclesiastical property the title of which goes back to Anglo-Saxon times. What is

SOME CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES

true of this material framework is equally true of the theological and legal position.

As our purpose then is to try to understand the distinctive features of the Church of England, we must begin with some points in its history. From the very beginning we find a double influence. The history of the Church of England dates indeed from the mission of St. Augustine in 597 A.D. This mission was the direct action of the Church of Rome, but as a matter of fact a large part of England was flooded by missionaries from Scotland and Ireland, representatives of the old Celtic Church. Although the organisation introduced by Augustine and Theodore ultimately prevailed through the whole island, yet the Church contained many elements and traditions derived from Celtic sources. Moreover, Gregory the Great had suggested to St. Augustine that a considerable degree of independent development was to be left to the newly-founded Church, and from the first its rites and ceremonies differed from those of Rome. It may

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

not also have been without influence that its great organiser was not a Roman but a Greek Archbishop, Theodore of Tarsus, for we have to remember that the foundation of the English Church was a work of the Undivided Church.

When we turn to Anglo-Saxon times we find two different lines of development. On the one side we find English kings and bishops full of admiration for Rome as a centre from which they had received their religion and civilisation. There was the closest connection between the two Churches. English pilgrims were loyal and enthusiastic, and if Benedic Biscop came home to his monastery at Wearmouth with manuscripts, vestments, and ecclesiastical treasures from Rome, it is an existing memorial of this connection that the most important of all copies of the Latin Vulgate should have been produced on the banks of the Wear, and sent as a token of esteem to the Church of St. Peter. But, while the English Church thus recognised all that they owed to Rome as the centre of civilisation and religion, the National Church

SOME CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES

developed on its own lines. It was a national institution, and its ecclesiastical laws were largely the work of secular councils on which the bishops had a seat. The predominance of the lay element has always been conspicuous in the English Church.

The Norman Conquest brought the British Isles much into the swim of European life, and gradually two opposing currents of policy asserted themselves strongly. On the one side a series of able ecclesiastics aimed at securing the independence and privileges of the Church by bringing it into close obedience to the central organisation of Rome ; on the other side national development tended to assert the insularity and independence of the English State and Sovereigns and their refusal to submit to outside influence. There was much opposition to foreign ecclesiastics, to payments to foreign Courts, and to the influence of foreign Monastic Orders. Legislation such as the Act of *Praemunire* was introduced limiting ecclesiastic

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

authority, and in the reign of Henry V the property of alien priories was confiscated, although care was taken that it should still be used in a manner beneficial to the Church. Throughout the Middle Ages, too, there was much popular religious life. There was criticism of the faults of ecclesiastics, there was a good deal of simple and evangelical religion, and this culminated in the teaching of Wyclif, who combined attacks on the ecclesiastical situation and a desire for a simpler gospel with a good deal of political radicalism. Many of our modern religious movements might be paralleled at different periods in the Middle Ages.

Like the Church of England, the history of the Reformation is a complicated story. The final result was produced by various influences. There was the old national feeling opposed to the claims of the Papal Curia and expressed by the statement in the Reformation Acts that the Realm of England was and always had been an empire. There was the influence

SOME CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES

of the humanism of Colet, More, and Erasmus, which demanded a conservative reformation. There was the popular objection to the rights and privileges of the clergy, and the objection of the national clergy to the exactions and authority of Rome. There was a strong conservative element which has always been characteristic of the English people and which checked any great tendency to change. On the other hand there was the influence of the foreign reformers, which became strongest in the reign of Elizabeth. The result was a reformation in character different from that in Continental countries ; while in most of them the old Church was swept away and a new Church built up upon what were supposed to be the principles of primitive Christianity, in England there was no attempt made to destroy the old or to make either doctrinal or constitutional reconstruction complete. Only such changes were made as were necessary to remove what was considered erroneous teaching and to reform practical abuses. If we turn to the

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

preface of our Prayer-book, for example, it is quite clear that a continuity of worship is aimed at. As ecclesiastical lawyers know, the pre-Reformation Canon Law, so far as it was accepted in England, is of authority in the Courts unless it conflicts with a statute of the realm. Only necessary changes were made in the constitution of the Church. The old corporations were not dissolved except in the case of the monasteries and other institutions which were supposed to be superstitious, and a considerable part of the property of the Church remained in the same possession as before.

The influence of different parties and movements may be traced in different enactments during the Reformation. By the reign of Queen Elizabeth the various movements had become clear, and the aim of our leading statesmen and theologians was to build up the Church on a national basis, and to make it as comprehensive as circumstances allowed. The result of the Reformation was to modify and reform the existing institutions,

SOME CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES

not to create a new Church in accordance with a new system of doctrine. Since that time the Church of England has suffered hardly any change in its formularies or in its constitution, but it has been profoundly modified by the influence of various schools of thought, each of which has interpreted its formularies in accordance with its own convictions. It is characteristic of the Church of England, as has already been remarked, that the theology is the creation of the Church—the Church is not founded on a theology. How important and right this is we shall see later.

From the reign of Queen Elizabeth dated the beginnings of different schools of theology. While to Chillingworth we owe the formularisation of the more Protestant side of the Church of England, with Hooker begins the perhaps more characteristic series of Anglican theologians. Anglicanism in the modern sense of the term was developed and worked out by the great divines of the seventeenth century. The struggle between the Church and Puritanism

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

was partly, at any rate, a struggle between the national and foreign elements of the English Reformation. It is probable that, if there had been greater wisdom and discretion on the part of Laud and Charles I, both the definite schism and the political revolution might have been avoided. Puritanism had its day and was shown to be alien to the genius of the English people, and at the time of the Restoration the English Church found itself the religion of the vast majority of the people. It was learned, it had a large body of able and distinguished members, and had there been a reasonable element of religious toleration and political wisdom its hold upon the people might have been retained. But the Roman tendencies of Charles II, the Romanism of James II, the fear of papal influence and political tyranny, weakened its influence. The non-juring schism on the accession of William III and the suspicion that fell upon High Churchmen as opposed to the reigning dynasty threw influence and power into the hands of the Latitudinarian

SOME CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES

Movement associated largely with the name of Tillotson, and in the first half of the eighteenth century the Whig ascendancy, the suppression of Convocation, and the influence of deistic literature reduced the spiritual life of the country to the lowest ebb.

The movement for a religious awakening grew up in the Church of England, but a secularised Church was unable to contain the vigorous life and the Arminian enthusiasm of Wesleyanism. As against deism the theology of Butler laid the foundations of the philosophical movements of the future, and though Wesleyanism became separated from the Church its influence lived within it, and the close of the eighteenth and early portion of the nineteenth centuries were remarkable for the development of the evangelical movement, associated with the name of Simeon at Cambridge. It revived the sense of personal religion and stirred up missionary enterprise.

During this period the High Church influence had lived on; the failure of the

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

Stuart succession destroyed all suspicion of disloyalty ; latitudinarianism failed to hold the religious feelings of the country ; evangelicalism was powerless against intellectual movements, and the High Church party began to assert itself again. The religious influence harmonised with a romantic reaction against the eighteenth century traditions and the revival of idealistic philosophy, and it came to a head, as we know, in the well-known Oxford Movement which dates from 1833. That movement has stirred not merely the Church of England, but the Anglo-Saxon world and beyond. Its effects have been felt in other branches of the Church. Like every other movement in the Church of England, it had its prejudices and its weaknesses, but the intellectual and religious transformation that it has effected has been profound. It was followed by a strong movement of liberal theology which eventually began to influence it.

We need hardly pursue our history any further, but it may be remarked that there

SOME CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES

are many conflicting tendencies of thought in the Church of England at the present day. I believe that probably the strongest, though the least assertive, is the old-fashioned traditional teaching of the Church of England which we can find at all periods, and which might be represented in the Middle Ages by Chaucer's Poor Parson, who taught " Cristes lore and his apostles twelve, and first he folwed it him-selve." There is a formulated High Church School with every variety of opinion leading up almost to acceptance of the Roman position ; there is the constant leaven of Broad Church views of every shade ; there is a strong feeling of affection for the national Church ; there is the evangelical movement, which has always preserved its narrow but intense standard of personal piety and its enthusiasm for missions, and it is exhibiting at the present day revival and enlightenment.

Such is the Church of England. Is it the illogical congeries of inconsistent opinions, or is it a homogeneous but comprehensive

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

Church which, like a prism with many facets, reflects all the varying rays of the sun ?

Let us consider, then, some characteristics of the English Church. First there is continuity. There can, I think, be no manner of doubt that the Church of England has been continuous in its tradition from the time of St. Augustine. There have been changes, but there has never been a new start. This continuity implies direct connection in life and thought with the Primitive Church and a definite share in the complete tradition of Christianity. The further meaning of this we shall discuss later.

Secondly, it is a national Church. It is a mistake to consider that the fact that the Church is a national Church dates back only to the Reformation. The Church was definitely established, if we may use the term, from the beginning, and in Anglo-Saxon times the influence and authority of the secular power were greater than they are at the present day. The laws of the Church were, as we

SOME CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES

have noticed, not made by separate synods of the clergy, but by mixed councils of statesmen and ecclesiastics. It is the fashion in some circles nowadays to detract from the value of the Establishment, and that not only on the part of those opposed to the Church, but of those who assert their friendship. Both from the national and the religious point of view that seems to me a most unfortunate position. It may be that in the future we may have to submit to an Act of Disestablishment, as we may have to submit to many other changes injurious to the country. But I am sure that the loss to the nation will be great. From the point of view of the nation the Church of England has been one of the great means of its creation, of its development, of its education. It has not always fulfilled its duty as well as it might, and some probably of the religious disadvantages under which we suffer at the present time arise from its failure at different periods in the past. But on the whole its work has been great and of profound importance.

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

From the point of view of the Church, the influence of the connection with the State is even more important and more wholesome. It compels, as nothing else does, the Church to realise its universal duty and mission. It prevents it from degenerating into a sect or cult. It protects it from the evils of ecclesiasticism. It will, I think, generally be found that those persons who are anxious to promote the dis-establishment of the Church do so because they have substituted for Catholic Christianity some narrow conception of the Church, and that they are so absorbed in that that they forget its wider and more universal aspect. It is our fundamental duty to remember that the Church exists not for formulating a particular theory of its existence, but for carrying the message of the Gospel to every soul in the country.

The third characteristic I would suggest is that there has always been a large element of freedom in the Church of England. In many ways the mediæval Church everywhere had a

SOME CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES

great deal of free life, and that freedom has been preserved in the Church of England. This is partly, no doubt, due to the character of the English people, who are inclined to be tolerant and have a healthy instinct which prevents them from being too anxious to limit truth to any system ; but further than that, it is based upon the particular institution which we inherit from the Middle Ages, namely, the freehold of the clergy. Here again is one of the most characteristic features of the Church of England which our would-be reformers are anxious to destroy. It may be admitted that the judicial procedure by which we deal with a criminous clerk still needs improvement. It may be further admitted that some universal pension system, with rules of compulsory retirement, may be desirable. But anything further to limit the security of tenure of the clergy would bring disadvantages far exceeding the advantages. At present the clergy have a position in which they are free both as against their people and as against their bishop. They

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

can speak with authority, they can say what they think, they know that they cannot be proceeded against except in a judicial manner. We have quite sufficient evidence of how unfair, intolerant, and unjust the bishops would be if left to deal with their clergy in an arbitrary manner. We have often heard of the unfortunate position of the Nonconformist minister who angers his chief and important adherent. No doubt there are disadvantages connected with the freehold, but in estimating the value of any institution we have to weigh the good against the bad, and I am convinced that this freehold of the English clergyman is one of the great securities for the freedom, the sincerity, and the comprehensiveness of the Church.

A fourth characteristic of the Church of England in the past has been its close connection with the Universities, and in consequence a wide diffusion of learning among the clergy. Previous, indeed, to recent reforms the Church of England had almost a monopoly of the Universities, and as Orders were necessary for

SOME CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES

holding a large number of important positions, a considerable proportion of the ablest men of the country were ordained and the Church displayed a good deal of remarkable ability.

We need not now enumerate the steps by which this monopoly was destroyed, and we cannot doubt that justice and fairness demanded that that should be the case. But both in Oxford and Cambridge the Church is left with large endowments and a great opportunity. The newer universities, now that the period of suspicious youth is passing away, are showing a general desire to welcome the establishment of theological faculties, provided the principles on which they are built, of freedom and tolerance, are not interfered with. And it is of essential importance for the country that the Church should take full advantage of all its opportunities. Again it may be noticed that there has been and is an unfortunate tendency upon the part of one section of the ecclesiastical authorities to increase the separation between the Church and the universities,

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

to remove the education of the clergy to seminaries under ecclesiastical control, and to disparage the importance of the intellectual element in general. This again, as in the case of the Establishment, arises from the habit of substituting a particular view of the Church for the more fundamental teaching of Christianity, a tendency to make religion an esoteric interest of the few instead of a universal leaven of the whole mass.

Here in London we are glad to think that in the University a Faculty of Theology has been created in which quite fair play is given to the Church of England side by side with other religious bodies, and in King's College, though certain constitutional changes have been necessary, for which I personally was largely responsible, care was taken to leave to the Faculty of Theology in the College a dignified and important position, and to give it full opportunity, within the atmosphere of freedom which the University rightly demands, of religious teaching and learning. I hope that

SOME CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES

nothing will be done in the future to sever the close and intimate connection that still exists between the theological and other faculties.

Those then, I believe, are four of the main characteristics of the Church of England, the continuity of its life and teaching, the close association with the State, the tradition of freedom among the clergy, and the tradition of learning, and they are, I believe, four healthy principles upon which a Church may be built up.

I wish now to speak for a few moments of what is really implied in our conception of the continuity of the Church, as it has an important bearing upon the subject we are discussing. It has often been remarked that the Christian Church is not built up upon the Bible, but it has created the Bible. It is equally true to say that it is not built up on the Creeds, but it has created the Creeds. That means to say that ultimately there is no written or narrowing system which should restrain the freedom of

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

the Church. It is based really upon the personality and teaching of our Lord, partly, no doubt, recorded in the New Testament, partly, also, influencing the Church before that New Testament was written. And this means, if we carry our analysis further, that it is built up upon a personality, and a personality of divine and infinite potentiality. Further than that, we believe that the Christian Church in all ages is inspired and guided by the Holy Spirit. Christianity, then, is a force or power unlimited, unrestrained, in its capacity and influence. It is, of course, true that our chief knowledge of its Founder is based upon the writings of the New Testament, and that will always be the guide of the Church ; but whenever a hard literal interpretation and quite untenable claim to infallibility has been imposed on the Bible it has restrained and hindered the life of the Church. It is equally true that the Christian Creed, which does little more than formulate the fundamental belief of the Church, namely, the revelation of God in Christ, is a

SOME CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES

document of authority and importance. But again, if any attempt is made to turn it into an infallible and unalterable statement, the freedom of the Church is endangered.

It is as a result of this characteristic of the Church that there come its varied life and power. Study the first three centuries of its history. If we do this from one point of view we may dwell upon their unity of spirit and the impression we draw will be true. There is, however, another side equally remarkable and equally important, the remarkable variety of life. The Church came in contact with peoples of many varying characteristics, it seized the gift each had to offer, and developed it, for the good of the whole. It learnt its emotional religion from the East. It assimilated the Greek philosophy. Rome gave it law and order; Carthage the fiery zeal of Tertullian and Cyprian.

Or we turn to the Middle Ages. It must always be remembered that the Mediæval Church, though it had a large traditional authority and a developed Church order, yet

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

preserved much of the freedom of early Christianity, and no one can fail to be struck by the creative power and variety of life and thought and worship which the Middle Ages present. The continuity of tradition has been preserved, and although it may be limited in certain directions the freedom of the Church is still retained.

And now I want to contrast with that the limitations which more modern days have attempted to put on the Christian spirit, the result and the cause of Christian division. Take for example Calvinism. In the Calvinistic Churches you have a definite break of continuity; the old Church was swept away, a new Church was built up on information no doubt derived from the past, but largely on the authority of a single individual, and that authority formulated into a strict system of doctrine and discipline. Here you have one aspect of Christianity, and that aspect most imperfect, made to take the place of the rich variety of the message of Christ. And

SOME CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES

necessarily as soon as the fundamental conception ceases to be satisfying you get decay of the Church. Or take again the reconstitution of the Roman Church in the Council of Trent. The Church of Rome no doubt has preserved some of its continuity of life, but it too has attempted to stereotype one of the principal aspects of Christianity. It formulated its doctrine with great care in the Council of Trent and organised its policy on an autocratic basis. As a result a Church has been built up quite incapable of responding to many aspects of human nature. Everywhere you will find a tendency for the Roman Church to be more and more divorced from the national life and for the national life to develop itself outside traditional Christianity and often outside the influence of any religion.

Now let us consider the Church of England from the same point of view. The Church of England has preserved its sense of continuity and it has checked and restrained free religious life only to a moderate extent by formulas. The

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

Thirty-nine Articles are clearly intended to be a formula of comprehension, not a formula of separation. The tradition of a varied life has continued and the Church of England has been able to present Christianity in many varied aspects. It has not succeeded entirely. One sometimes cannot help feeling that it might have done so. If the Laudian revival had realised the doctrine of Christian tolerance side by side with its revival of the thought of Christian continuity, if the Church of the Restoration had exhibited some little more statesmanship, and if the Church of the eighteenth century had been able to retain the spiritual movement of Wesleyanism, it is probable that the greater part of the religious life of the country might have been developed within the fold of one Church, and not in a number of separated bodies. We cannot change the past, but there are movements in the present day which suggest the possibility of much of the harm being undone, and it is essential at the present time that we should have a healthy and sound theory of the

SOME CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES

Church. That means that we must recognise that the variety of life within the Church is a gain and not a mistake.

It is sometimes said that the Church of England does not know its own mind. For instance, the other day I read in the papers the report of a lecture which spoke of the Church of England as "divided, illogical, incoherent," and stated that "the modern world is not growing more friendly to the privileged paradox of a self-contradictory Church." The rhetoric, no doubt, is admirable; these remarks indeed seem to me a striking instance of the manner in which a certain type of rhetorician delights in exaggerating what he conceives to be the faults of the body which he adorns. But if the argument of my lecture be true the Church of England is in no sense illogical or incoherent or self-contradictory. It represents Christianity in an atmosphere of freedom, and because Christianity is bigger and wider than most minds can grasp, different aspects of it are exhibited

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

by different sections and groups. Their agreement is fundamental. For they all accept Christ. Their differences are superficial and only dangerous when any one section of the Church claims a monopoly. Danger comes, indeed, when any party attempts to make us what it calls self-consistent and therefore organises us on a narrow basis.

Some would like us to be entirely evangelical. They have a narrow creed often held in an intense form which in a comparatively small section of the community builds up a pious and devout life, but which has never shown itself capable of appealing to the mass of people. They would have us organise the Church on this basis. There are others who have developed what is an interesting and, up to a certain point, true conception of the Church which we call Anglicanism. The Anglican movement of the last hundred years has done a great deal to expand our horizon in many directions, but more and more it has become clear that it only represents certain aspects of Christianity,

SOME CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES

that it does not put the Gospel of Christ forward as a whole, and that it too will only appeal to certain sections of the population. It seems to me one of the most unfortunate characteristics of the present day that many members of the High Church party, forgetting the lesson they might have learnt from the Jacobean and Caroline Churches, from the fate of Laud and the failure of Cosin, are attempting to acquire a monopoly of the Church of England and force their views on those who are unwilling. The English people will not stand monopolies. They demand fairness, justice and tolerance, and no party in the Church which does not exhibit these qualities can hope to preserve its influence. If the High Church party or any section of it,—if the High Church bishops, for to them what I say particularly applies, forget this, they will inflict very grave injuries on both their own ideals and on the Church of England. But while saying this let me warn some of their severe critics that they themselves are perilously near the same

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

fault. Many of those who make the greatest claims to being Liberals seem to be extraordinarily illiberal in their opinions and are quite ready to anathematise those whose fault in their opinion is to believe in her too much. I would venture also to suggest that it may be as great a misrepresentation of the Church to exaggerate as to neglect its Protestant element. There are also in the Church of England movements of learned theology, of popular enthusiasm, of social reform, and they are all healthy as movements.

All these represent aspects of Christianity. They none of them represent Christianity in its completeness. The true and the ideal Church should be one in which people of varying characteristics and habits can equally find a home. It should be built up on an acceptance of the Scriptures without a narrow theory of their interpretation ; on the acceptance of that view of the Person of Christ which is formulated in the Creed and which is the universal inheritance of the Christian Church ; it should be

SOME CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES

built up on the widest interpretation of continuity and catholicity—that is to say, it should desire to keep in contact and to learn from the whole tradition of Christianity in every age and place. It must have some unity of organisation, and I believe that in the historic episcopacy there is a bond of union which may keep together a Church which responds to the diversity of human nature. It must have a certain unity of worship, and that is given us in the Christian Sacraments. But beyond that there should be a wide variety of life and thought. The full and complete Gospel of Christ, the full inheritance of Catholic Christianity, is greater than one man's mind can grasp. All the varied types which are presented to us are really reflections of certain portions of that inheritance. If a man's self-will and self-content become too strong, he begins to think that his own particular view represents the whole, he becomes heretical and schism may arise, but if he will recognise that it is true of all men here that they only see in a glass darkly, that

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

his own particular view of Christianity must be necessarily imperfect, and that the Gospel of Christ is bigger than his thoughts, then we get a basis on which all Christians may be able to come together into the unity of one Church. I believe that it is just because the Church of England preserves a considerable measure of the Christian heritage that this is a possible destiny for it. Some things which it has lost have been preserved by those religious bodies which have separated from us, and the more and greater reunion there can be, the more the different bodies can unite with us, the greater, the truer, the richer will be the representation of Christianity which the corporate Church can give.

THE CHURCH'S PART IN THE
PREPARATION FOR THE NEW
AGE

By F. T. WOODS, D.D.
BISHOP OF PETERBOROUGH

SYNOPSIS

RECONSTRUCTION the business of the Church. The present opportunity.

I

The choice between chaos and comradeship. The possibility of chaos. Bolshevism not confined to Russia.

II

Can comradeship be attained without chaos? Object-lesson in political sphere. Public conscience awake to need for industrial and international comradeship. Price to be paid for international comradeship. "Sovereign independence" of nations no longer possible. Need for a similar surrender of independence in industrial life. The necessity of taking risks. Growing recognition that the problem is a spiritual one.

III

The Church's part in preparing for comradeship. The Church must not seek to dominate politics, nor merely support a party. Neither should it propagate economic theories or truckle to democracy as such. True democracy must have spiritual ideals. Here is the Church's opportunity—to put the whole problem, international and social, in the right setting. National vocation instead of national ambition. The Church and true internationalism. New ideals in industry. The call to progress and adventure.

THE CHURCH'S PART IN THE PREPARATION FOR THE NEW AGE

“There is a tide in the affairs of men,
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune ;
Omitted, all the voyage of their life
Is bound in shallows, and in miseries.
On such a full sea are we now afloat ;
And we must take the current when it serves,
Or lose our ventures.”

—*Julius Cæsar*, Act IV., sc. 3.

THESE well-known words will suffice as a text for my lecture. If ever they were true of the Church they are now. For the Church's business is Reconstruction. The impact of God upon the world all through the centuries, culminating in the life of our Lord, and continued in the enterprise of the Church, is the reconstruction of humanity. A reconstruction both in separate characters, and in the communities into which those characters are gathered. A reconstruction which goes to the depths, for it grapples with the innermost soul ;

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

and which searches the heights, for it never leaves man alone until he is fitted and equipped not merely for time, but for eternity. Therefore, at a moment when reconstruction is the main subject of thought in Europe, is the meeting place of ten thousand minds, and the breeding place of ten thousand schemes, the Church should have something to say.

The opportunity for reconstruction is bewildering in its grandeur. We must have felt during these past days like spectators breathless and spellbound at some tremendous drama, wondering on what new scene of political collapse or military triumph the curtain would go up each morning, hushed with awe at the appalling speed at which moments of history have followed one another which would ordinarily have expanded into centuries. In one sense we have felt powerless and detached, as being mere spectators ; and yet when we think of the new act which will follow the peace, we know that we are not only each one of us intimately concerned and solemnly responsible,

PREPARATION FOR THE NEW AGE

but that the Society of Christ will find at once such a test and such an opportunity as has not been known, to say the least, for a thousand years. The old world is fast breaking up ; the new world is still in the furnace. It is plastic ; ready for any master moulder who may come along. It may receive impressions now which will determine its course for centuries.

I

He would be a bold man who would venture to prophesy at a time like this. The book of the future was never more closely sealed. Yet it may be said with some confidence—and this is the first point that I put before you—that, broadly speaking, the future lies with one or other of two alternatives. These can be summed up in two words, and each word can be taken in its uttermost meaning—Chaos and Comradeship.

It is a terrific choice, but we have come to the parting of the ways. Men live and work by ideas, and the verdict will be determined by the

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

ideas which are dominant during the next few years.

It is not difficult to see that chaos is within easy reach. I am not a pessimist, but it is useless to disguise the fact that a force has been let loose in Russia which, whatever high doctrines it may originally have preached, has proved by its actions so far that it is out to make mincemeat of civilisation and to destroy society. Europe has had to reckon with autocracy and militarism, and that reckoning, thank God, is, from a military point of view, complete. It may have to reckon in the near future with autocracy and militarism dressed up in the very latest democratic fashions, and preaching doctrines which would out-revolutionise the French Revolution. It is not my task to investigate the causes of this sinister movement, which is as far from genuine democracy as the North Pole is from the South. Much of the guilt of it must be laid at the door of the despotic abomination which it supplanted. Much of it has been due to the fact that at the

PREPARATION FOR THE NEW AGE

moment when Russia was in direst need of leaders there were no leaders forthcoming, but merely men whose faith in the most extreme political doctrines was only equalled by their complete incapacity to put them into practice. For while proclaiming comradeship on the housetops, they have completely denied it in fact. They have erected a *régime* compared with which the rule of Tsars was mild and moral.

Nor is this spirit—the spirit which while preaching comradeship virtually denies it—unknown in other parts of Europe. There are those among ourselves, for instance, whose idea of reconstruction is rooted in a class war. This means comradeship up to a point, for their own circle, but the cold shoulder and the back door for everyone else. There are those who, even if their ideals are worthy, believe that any efficient reconstruction must be preceded by the wholesale destruction of most, if not all, of the institutions with which we are familiar. It may be true that such thinkers are not very

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

numerous, but they are certainly not very silent. It will not be their fault if during the next few years we are not plunged into industrial and social chaos, compared with which, so far as this country is concerned, the miseries of the war would be small and transient. For such a chaos, by destroying credit and paralysing industry, would make recovery as lengthy and difficult a process as undoubtedly it will be in Russia.

Apart from this section of the community there is a solid block of working-class opinion which has not yet been wholly convinced of the efficacy of sane and moderate measures. For one thing, the conditions under which many of them have been living do not tend to an equable temper and a balanced judgment. "The nerves of the men and their families"—so says one of the Government reports on Industrial Unrest—are racked by hard workshop conditions, low and unfair wages in some cases, deficient housing accommodation, war sorrows and bereavements, excessive prices of food,

PREPARATION FOR THE NEW AGE

the vagaries of the Recruiting Officer, and withal by a feeling that their privileges as members of certain trade unions had been given up only to better the condition of others who had not served any apprenticeship to their trades. Upon all these disturbing causes of disquiet has grown proof upon proof that . . . Government-made promises were not kept, that pledges were broken, that constitutional trade unionism was no longer of any avail, and that the authorities in command were ignoring their grievances and troubles, and threatening them instead with military service by withdrawing their protecting badges and trade cards after they had been repeatedly assured that their skill and labour were more needed in the shops than in the Army.”¹ This, it is no exaggeration to say, is the state of mind in which many of our best men and our most skilled workers are approaching the tremendous industrial problem which confronts us.

¹ Report on Industrial Unrest. Yorkshire and East Midlands Area.

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

If those who govern, whether in Parliament or in industry, are wise and farseeing, all will be well, for at bottom the workers as a whole are both reasonable and restrained. But this mass of opinion is easily inflamed, as indeed we have discovered during the war, and it will only require some short-sighted measure, or the blind stupidity of a few reactionary employers, for these new doctrines of chaos to spread like wildfire, and to render useless all the steady preparation for the better organisation of industry which is already going forward. After all, if men mistake chaos for progress, who is to blame? Surely those who withheld that education by which alone a balanced judgment becomes possible, that knowledge of history which enables men to profit by the mistakes of their forefathers and places their own opportunity in its right setting; those who were represented by an early-Victorian employer who said, "The business of the men is not to think but to do their work. I'll do their thinking for them."

PREPARATION FOR THE NEW AGE

A nation which is only just beginning to take education seriously, which only a few months ago attempted to make any adequate provision for its lads and girls at their most impressionable age, has only itself to thank if the great mass of its workers view these tremendous problems untrammelled by any wisdom which the past can produce, and ready to try experiments whose futility has been demonstrated time and again. The marvel is that in spite of all this the workers are in the main so extraordinarily sane and sensible ; that in spite of every incitement to the contrary they show a patience and moderation which some people who should know better would do well to emulate ; that often enough, as for instance in the main lines of the Labour Party's peace programme, they show a truer sense of the meaning of life and a larger vision of its possibilities than many of their so-called masters. I mention these things in order to put quite plainly before you that chaos, even in Britain, is by no means unthinkable, and that therefore the solemnity of the oppor-

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

tunity which confronts us at the present time is difficult to express in ordinary language.¹

II

The problem before us, then, is this. Can comradeship be attained without chaos? And this must be asked in regard to the international sphere abroad as well as to the industrial sphere at home. At first sight it is not easy to be optimistic, for we are confronted with this outstanding and ugly fact, that before comradeship among nations could be reached we have had to wade through a ghastly chaos of war. As in Haydn's famous oratorio, the newly-created world—the League of Nations—has had to be preceded by the discords of the most frightful conflict in history. The argument, therefore, is apparently irresistible that if in the political sphere we could only attain

¹ The result of the general election, while it ensures that the work of reconstruction shall be approached on sane and moderate lines, may have the effect—if the Government is too timid and conservative—of encouraging the workers to try that "direct action" which it is our wisdom to avoid.

PREPARATION FOR THE NEW AGE

comradeship through chaos, the same will be true in the industrial sphere. But a moment's thought will show that the cases are not really parallel. For one thing, the European nations which five years ago were, from the military point of view, the strongest and best organised were determined not to have comradeship. Therefore no progress could be made until this impregnable wall of opposition, as it appeared to be then, was broken down.

The same might have been said in the industrial sphere of some employers and some workers. When the war broke out everything was ready for an industrial fight on a stupendous scale. Neither side was prepared for any real surrender. It was evident that chaos would precede comradeship. Things have altered now. The object-lesson in the political sphere has not been lost on the industrial sphere. The result is that men of good will are bending their energies to discover a means by which this political example shall be avoided, and peace shall be attained in the world of industry without

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

that process of blood and iron which has desolated the hearts and homes of Europe.

Nor is this all. One result of our experience in these four years is that the public conscience is wide awake, and insists upon some method being found by which comradeship between classes, and particularly between employers and workers, shall be achieved without delay. There was no public conscience available in regard to comradeship between nations before the war. There were signs of it, of course, in the Hague tribunal and in the arbitration treaties which had been concluded, but as for real international fellowship, the Germans did not want it, and we did not think it was possible. There were no creative ideas on the subject moving in men's minds. There were only a few pious aspirations. Before you can erect castles on the earth you must have them in the air, and there were no castles in the air concerning real comradeship between nations five years ago. Therein lies the contrast to the present moment. Everyone has his castle in the

PREPARATION FOR THE NEW AGE

air in regard to this comradeship in industry. Hundreds of our best men are planning it ; thousands believe in it ; organisations are being set on foot to achieve it. Therefore we need not be discouraged by the fact that political comradeship has had to be bought at so fearful a price. For with certain sinister exceptions, of which I have already spoken, the flood of opinion is setting towards it, and its accomplishment is probably nearer than at any time in the past.

It is none the less obvious that a price must be paid, and a serious price, if we are to bring it about. This is obvious, in the first place, in regard to international comradeship—the League of Nations. We shall have to be prepared to surrender something at least of what has usually been called our sovereign independence. It is not too much to ask of a country whose soldiers have by the million surrendered their personal independence for the sake of a great ideal that in like manner it should give up whatever of its independence is necessary to make

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

the League of Nations real and firm. In the old days the process of transferring the claims of honour from the pistol to the law court was effected without any loss of dignity to the persons concerned. And the process may well be repeated now, though on an infinitely larger scale. The fact is that the kind of independence which makes a League of Nations impossible is not worth having; nay, more, as we have seen in the last four years, it may prove to be an unmitigated curse. We know what we have had to pay for the independent action of Austria when she sent her truculent note to Serbia—an action which in a real League of Nations would have been appraised at its proper worth by the public mind of the whole association, before it could ever have run on to the awful consequences which have ensued. For European nations to be independent in this sense means that any one of them, under whatever guise of plausibility, can force the pace in armaments, involving the other nations in mountains of unwelcome expenditure, and

PREPARATION FOR THE NEW AGE

compelling the Governments to turn their whole attention away from the social developments of peace to an unproductive preparation for war. In a true sense, indeed, the independence of nations has gone already. Economically they are bound together by cords that cannot be loosed. The nations live in the same street. They share each other's goods. They buy in each other's shops. It is time for them to inaugurate a common council to protect the common ideals, and to settle the common disputes. It is no longer possible to combine this industrial dependence with a political independence by which each keeps its counsel and goes its own way. We have, in fact, arrived at that moment in history, which has long been foreseen, when, owing to their dependence upon one another, as well as the frightfulness of modern war, nations possess so monstrous a power for mutual injury, that, unless they are prepared to surrender something of their freedom of action at the call of the greater commonwealth which includes them

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

all, the end of civilisation is well in sight. Mr. Wells has truly said that it becomes more and more plainly the choice between a League of Free Nations and "a famished race of men, looting in search of non-existent food amid the smouldering ruins of civilisation."

The same is true in industry. Here, too, there must be some surrender of sovereign power in the face of the new ideal. Employer and worker are utterly dependent upon one another. Their object is the same, namely, production. Each is entirely indispensable to the other. They are, in fact if not in name, comrades in the same concern. Then why not recognise that fact in the reconstruction of industry which is impending? Why not give the workers a real share in the management, at least in so far as conditions of work and wages are concerned? The task before us is to lift the relationship of employer and employed out of the rut of the mere cash connection, on to that level where there is something more than profits and pay to be thought of, where the

PREPARATION FOR THE NEW AGE

interest in the business is something more than financial, and employers and men can sit at the same table, not in mutual suspicion, but in co-operative endeavour.

This, of course, will mean risks. The old guard, the industrial backwoodsmen, will be loud in their warnings against any such real comradeship between masters and men. Yet it is reactionary employers who are the real instigators of revolution. For they give the impression that no further concessions will be made in the direction of industrial fellowship except such as can be extorted by force. I say we shall have to take risks. But if Britons have not by this time learned to take risks, whether corporately or individually, they have learned nothing. The beginnings of this comradeship are already to be seen in many directions. Several great industries have organised themselves, or are organising themselves, on the lines of the Whitley Report. A working comradeship has been carefully thought out and is already in practice among such vital

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

trades as the pottery industry in Staffordshire and the building trade in London.

If, on the one hand, there is a tendency to recognise the seriousness of the situation and the drastic character of any remedies that can be adequate, there is also an increasing emphasis on the spiritual side of the matter. The problem is not to be expressed in the ordinary categories of wages or hours of labour. It is part and parcel of a widespread longing for a higher life, a deeper culture, a more adequate opportunity for the development of that which each personality is capable of producing, both in character and work. The problem, whether international or industrial, is more and more being regarded from the point of view of these wider and higher interests of humanity with which it is the Church's business to concern herself, and in regard to which she has some right to speak.

PREPARATION FOR THE NEW AGE

III

This brings me to the main point of this lecture—the part which can be taken and should be taken by the Church in preparing for this comradeship which we hope will be the dominating feature in the new age.

It will be well, first of all, to clear the ground by indicating some avenues which are not open to this end. The Church, for instance, must not seek to dominate politics, though it is entirely her duty to inspire politicians to the highest and broadest outlook. Her task is not to dominate politics but to moralise them. Nor will her objects be best secured in the long run if she throws her weight into the scale of any political party. In my judgment, for example, the ideals of the Labour Party as put forward in their peace programme mark an advance in Christian idealism upon any political programme which has hitherto been put forward. They breathe a moral earnestness which we have not

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

usually expected or found in politics. None the less, though I do not doubt that many Churchpeople, when the time comes, will cast their votes for that programme, I do not think that the Church's official support of it would bring the millennium. Our concern in the main is with principles rather than programmes. Equally foolish would it be for the Church to pose as an instructor in economics. The Church burnt its fingers too painfully in this in the industrial revolution at the beginning of last century. It is hardly too much to say that the Church endowed the then fashionable economic doctrines with divine sanction. Men honestly believed that free labour meant freedom for the employer to employ any worker at his own terms; that wages would settle themselves by some mysterious law of nature, and that to interfere with the economic system which brought fortunes on the one hand and poverty on the other was not more possible than to interfere with the movements of the solar system. The result was that, when a

PREPARATION FOR THE NEW AGE

state which amounted to economic slavery ensued, the Church, which should have declared in trumpet tones that industry was made for man and not man for industry, came on the scene with a pious benediction of the whole system, which can best be summed up in the well-known words of the hymn :

The rich man in his castle,
The poor man at his gate,
God made them, high or lowly,
And ordered their estate

The poor were told to be patient and the rich to be benevolent. In fact an economic doctrine which has since been proved to be false both in theory and in practice was accepted by the Church as an inflexible law though it palpably conflicted with her own principles.

Finally, to clear the ground, the Church must beware of going to the other extreme of attempting to out-democratise democracy. It is not her place to march at the tail of the democratic triumph. It is true that the fundamental doctrine of democracy is entirely in accord with that dignity and worth of human

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

nature to which we stand committed. But there is nothing sacrosanct about democracy as such, nor any guarantee that it must of necessity produce the perfect State. The scheme may be flawless on paper, but everything depends on the men who work it, as they know to their cost in Russia. In fact, if the Church has been lending her support to the great and terrible process of making the world safe for democracy, her energies will be required no less in the equally tremendous task of making democracy safe for the world.

In itself, democracy will neither destroy life nor save it. No governing class, not even the People with a capital P, can dispense with the need for training and knowledge, and it is difficult to exaggerate the thoroughness with which this process of education will have to be carried out if the new democracies of Europe are to find their feet. Democracy may be itself as materialistic as autocracy. It is not too much to say that unless and until its ideals include the spiritual—using that word in its

PREPARATION FOR THE NEW AGE

highest sense—democracy will not be safe for the world.

There are signs, we may be thankful to think, and not least in our own country, that many leaders of the people are well aware of this fact. They know that if democracy is to be the last word in government it must be spiritualised. It must submit to the test by which men and systems stand or fall. It must seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and only thus will all its objectives be fully reached.

If this be so, the Church's opportunity is at once obvious and amazing, whether you look at the international sphere or confine your attention to our problems at home. The Church will best do her part by putting the whole problem, whether international or social, in its right setting. So long as men have narrow views of the common good, and insist upon expressing it in terms of material gain, whether of territory or of profit, so long the problem will revolve in an ever vicious circle, and both men

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

and nations will fail of their true attainment. It is ours to insist that the problem is not even appreciated, much less solved, until it is placed in the light of God—God's intention, for men and nations, God's call to each for the service of all.

We must substitute for national ambition national vocation. Just as the individual by spiritualising the common good rises from mere egotism into unselfish service, so those groups of people—whether ancient groups like ours, or modern ones such as are at this moment trying to formulate a new national life—must find a real vocation, must realise that every people is a chosen people in the mind of God to do some work and render some service for the commonwealth. It is possible to point this out as a fact dry and detached, and evolved from the new conscience in Europe. It is much better to go behind that conscience to its source, and proclaim that this is a plan of the Most High, and that the Catholic Church is at once the herald of its coming and the instru-

PREPARATION FOR THE NEW AGE

ment of its achievement. This faith alone can save internationalism from being merely a dull and arid desert, to which all nations are levelled, and where all distinctions are lost. The Church has the chance just now to teach the true internationalism, which, while it grips on the one hand the world commonwealth of nations for which we hope, claims on the other the distinctive contribution which each people can bring, and secures their very differences as well as their similarities as part of the common stock. In a word, internationalism has to be moralised and Christianised. But if so, this will need, as the Americans would say, some enterprise. It will mean, in fact, a new and colossal propaganda of Christ's message to the world. To convert Europe and each of the nations, whether ancient or modern, to this point of view would be a sufficient enterprise. But what of India and China and Japan? How can any League of Nations be really permanent unless these vast tracts of humanity are converted to this ideal? Such a League will

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

naturally tend to the attitude of its lowest and least moralised member. If, therefore, it is to last, it must be based on such a potent spiritual ideal as shall increasingly inspire the backward members of the League, whether in Europe or Asia, and shall keep all the others fresh and strong in their attachment. Nations must be neighbourly and brotherly if the world is to survive. The only way to make them so is to convince them again and again—for each new generation will have to be captured as it comes—that this precisely is their relationship in the mind of God, that Christ died to produce it, that the Holy Spirit works to effect it.

The bearing of this on the present situation is obvious enough. Steps have been taken in regard to the armistice, and will be taken at the peace conference, which if the world is to move on and up must be the expression of those Christian ideals, unhesitating and undiluted. They must show inflexible justice, such as to satisfy the conscience of the world as interpreted by the great President. The conference must

PREPARATION FOR THE NEW AGE

be ready with mercy wherever even the slightest sign of repentance makes it possible. The settlement must be framed, not so much in view of the clamouring spectators at the present moment, whether they be those who cry for a devastating vengeance, or those more weak-kneed people who would let off the offenders and condone their crimes. It must rather have in view that impartial judgment which will be passed by the men of the future, who will mark the ideals, for which we fought, and the sacrifices which we incurred to uphold them ; but who also, and not least, will scrutinise the trouble we took to enshrine them in the terms of peace. We began the war on the high moral note. On that note we must make the Peace. There must be no attempts at the council table to whittle down the pure idealism of the President on the plea of so-called practical necessity. The disposal of the German colonies is a case in point. Whatever arrangement is made in regard to them it must be one that leaves the Allies without suspicion of anxiety

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

for territorial aggrandisement. Whatever nation or group of nations undertakes the responsibility for their government should act solely and definitely as a trustee of the League of Nations, until such time as the peoples in question are able worthily and efficiently to shoulder the responsibility of their own government. We must have a white peace, the whitest that history has ever known.

The highest comradeship to which nations have ever attained is within reach. There is a risk that in the very natural passions of the moment it may be missed. The Church must mount guard in order that no damage may be done at the outset to that great temple of liberty and righteousness and fellowship for which our best have given their lives in order that the foundations may be well and truly laid.

In like manner a new structure is impending in industry. Here again the Church's part is steadfastly and persistently to proclaim those principles which up till now have been so palpably ignored, but which alone can ensure the

PREPARATION FOR THE NEW AGE

commercial fabric of the future. Day in and day out we must insist on the sacredness of human life and its superiority to the so-called needs of the industrial machine. We must go on saying in the Name of Christ that industry is only a means to an end ; that while motives of self-interest must needs have their place, industry as a whole is an organisation of men and women in the service of the commonwealth ; that the conditions of life, whether of wages or housing, have an eternal significance ; for within them, as in a scaffolding, that personality is built up which comes from God and goes to God ; that the true estimate of work is not the profit which it makes but the character it produces, and that pride of craftsmanship is not necessarily connected with pecuniary reward.

In a word, the Church's business is to measure the industrial system by the values of Christ ; fearlessly to condemn all false valuations ; and so ardently to attract men's minds to the truth, that seeing a new vision of comradeship and service they shall gradually, perhaps even swiftly,

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

produce an organisation which will reflect it. The war has taught us to revalue life. It has given us a new definition of wealth, which has nothing to do with cash. It has revised our notion of nobility ; it has created a new class distinction, based neither on birth nor on money, but wholly on service. It has even provided that greedy word " profit " with a new meaning. For we now know that the truest profit is that which most benefits humanity. These values were scouted in pre-war days as utopian and visionary. For four years now they have been in actual practice ; we have been compelled to adopt them by the terrific force of abnormal circumstances. The return of the normal is impending. The critical question is, " Can we retain this valuation ? " In so far as it was adopted under pressure of the war there will be serious danger of losing it. The problem is to find the power which will conserve it.

It will certainly not be done by political power. There again we have an example and a warning in Russia. The revolution in its original form

PREPARATION FOR THE NEW AGE

gave opportunity for certain idealists to attempt to reorganise society at lightning speed on this very valuation. They attempted to construct the machinery without converting the people. When difficulties arose they took to cruelty and bloodshed. They proceeded in fact to burn down the house in order to roast the pig. Revolutions are very well, but it is of little avail to revolve political machinery unless the minds of men revolve as well. For a highly moralised political system you must have highly moralised men. And the only power which can effect that is spiritual.

Here is the opportunity of the Church—to unveil God as the highest good; to detach the individual from his merely personal interests in favour of a higher concern, so that work becomes not merely a means of living but a way to life: in a word, to transfer that passion for the common weal which millions have felt during the war into the social and economic fabric, and anchor it there for good. All this will need a supernatural dynamic, and it is

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

this which the Church is pledged to produce. The roll of martyrs is simply a list of men and women who conscientiously objected to the current valuation of life, and conscientiously adventured for the divine valuation which they had found. In like manner we must be conscientious objectors to the old and discredited system of organised selfishness among nations or States. We must be conscientious adventurers into a new world, and believe that God who has called us will guide our faltering steps aright.

Can the Church do this? On the answer depends her stand or her fall as the most potent influence in the coming world. Such reconstruction will have to begin in her own house in complete, fearless, and comprehensive revision of her own organisation, financial and political, as well as spiritual. For this financial and political reorganisation is ultimately spiritual. The lack of it unnerves the Body of Christ for its activities, blunts its edge as a weapon of the Kingdom of God. We have

PREPARATION FOR THE NEW AGE

talked about these reforms until the very air is tired of carrying the sound-waves of our speeches. An opportunity is now at hand for action. In a few weeks the Representative Church Council will be asked to accept the scheme of the Archbishops' Committee as amended by its own sub-committee. The scheme is not perfect. It may need still further adjustment. But it is the only door now open by which the Church can escape from her present almost intolerable impasse into the larger freedom which, if she is to face this task of spiritual leadership, she must have.

But this is not all. There will have to be a new orientation of the Church's outlook. She has been too self-centred in her own concerns. She must radiate. She must know that the only hope of saving her soul is to go out into the highways and hedges to preach, to live, and if need be to suffer, for the truth of Christ. She must learn to discard the standing dishes of ecclesiastical controversy, and concentrate on the

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

things that really matter. The Churchman, be he priest or layman, who distracts attention from the grand and simple factors of the Faith is a traitor to the Holy Cause at a moment when its potency is of vital moment for the whole future of the world.

There is growing up, and growing fast, a generation partly inside the Church, partly outside it, who know nothing, and care less than nothing, about our controversies and our shibboleths; some are students; thousands are war-workers, young women as well as young men. When the war is over they will be looking for new outlets for their energies. For a Church which refuses to emerge from its time-worn ruts they will have no use. To a Church which sees the vision and calls to the adventure they will give of their best. If in this Society they can discern any of the lineaments of Christ and recognise any sound of His voice, their devotion will be complete. The real question is, "Can the Church believe in the supernatural power of an all-available

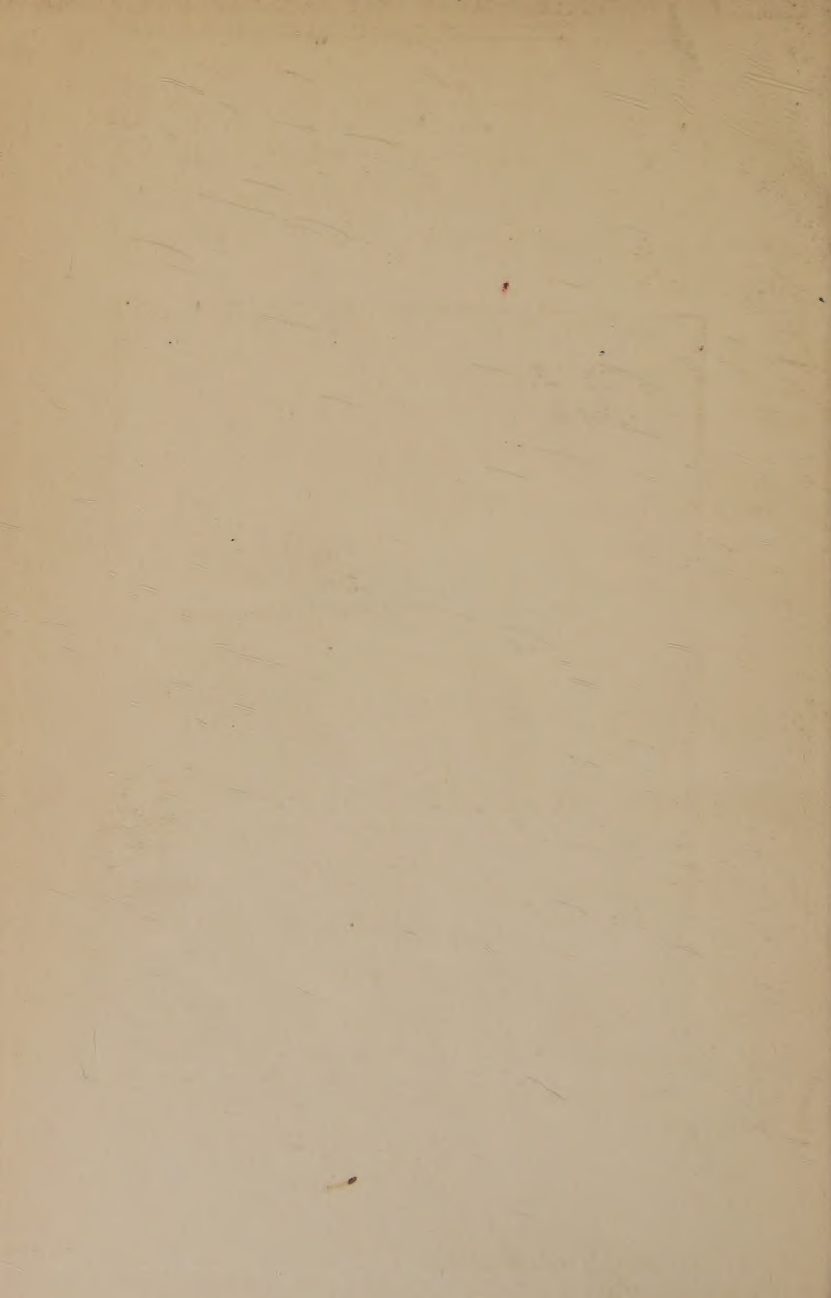
PREPARATION FOR THE NEW AGE

God ? ” It is the old question of the Maiden Mother, “ How shall this be ? ” And it is the old answer that must still be given. “ The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee . . . for no word from God shall be void of power.”

Can we believe that ? Can we act upon it ?
I believe we can.



PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY
RICHARD CLAY AND SONS, LIMITED,
BRUNSWICK STREET, STAMFORD STREET, S.E. 1,
AND BUNGAY, SUFFOLK.



65802

Henson, H.H.

280.3R

C473

The Church of England

5-18 Dec 1911

CT 10 68

280.3R

C473

65802

